

HOPE FOR A NEW EUROPE

**Booklet to meditate on Pope John Paul's
Ecclesia in Europa
*On Jesus Christ, Alive in His Church,
the Source of Hope for Europe***

**36 quotations accompanied by
quotations from the Holy Scripture
and responding prayers
written by young Europeans**

HOPE FOR A NEW EUROPE

Booklet to meditate on Pope John Paul's
post-synodal apostolic exhortation

Ecclesia in Europa (EiE)
*On Jesus Christ, Alive in His Church, the Source of Hope
for Europe*

INCLUDES:

- **Excerpts from *Ecclesia in Europa***
- **Scripture reflections**
- **Responding prayers**
- **Action responses.**

Produced by the European Sub-Committee of the
International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services
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PREFACE

Aldo Giordano

I had the pleasure of participating in the second special European synod of bishops in Rome from 21st to 23rd October 1999. The theme of the synod was "Jesus Christ alive in his Church, source of hope for Europe" which is the opening of the apostolic exhortation of Pope John Paul II's "Ecclesia in Europa" published in June 2003.

In European literature John Paul II is often portrayed as a "founding father" and "prophet of a new Europe". He has never hidden his "passion" for our continent. From just two synods of Europe there are about a thousand statements which he has dedicated to Europe, totally or in part. This is quite an extraordinary statistic when we remember that from 1938 to 1978 there have been only 136 statements from previous popes on this subject. During the synod I experienced a surprise which I still carry in my heart. On the one hand, the analysis of the European situation by the participants was rather negative and pessimistic: one had the impression that they had distinguished Europe as living in a kind of "apostolic silence". On the other hand, the closing message of the synod was full of hope. I asked myself how this were possible. The answer was that the synod fathers had been seeing with the eyes of faith. If we seek to understand our history through prayer, with the eyes of the Word of God, of the "Good news" of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, of the Spirit of the resurrection which

remains with us "until the end of time", we cannot do otherwise than to live in hope. If we believe in a God who has already given his life and has risen again, we cannot allow our faith to collapse.

This is why I believe that the small volume which outlines the document "Ecclesia in Europa" is particularly useful and up to date as a source of meditation and daily prayer. The combination of quotations from "Ecclesia in Europa" with passages from the Word of God and other forms of prayer allows us to move from historical-cultural reflections to a philosophical-theological vision, and so to arrive at a direct dialogue with God.

The booklet helps us to put ourselves on the pathway towards becoming protagonists for our history within Europe. In the booklet there are signals or "signs of the times" showing that, for Europeans, too it is a matter of some urgency that we search, with humility, for the light. I think of the questions raised by the series of recent historical events, turned into true life spectacles by the global media: 9-11 in New York 2001, terrorism, the tsunami of South East Asia, the succession of destructive hurricanes, the emergence of China and India in world markets and politics, and the death of John Paul II. I think of the process of European unification going through one of its most profound crises. For example, the French referendum of 29th May, and that of Holland on 1st June, on the treaty for a European constitution, with their negative results, have amounted to a political and cultural shock forcing a profound rethinking of the idea of a

European union. I think about the question of Europe's borders. The European Union has grown but in fact no one knows precisely where its borders are. The current debate about the entrance of Turkey into the Union and the relationship of the EU with its neighbours (Russia, the Balkans, and North African as far as Israel) is significant. Speaking of borders it is also significant to ask ourselves about relations with other continents. The churches are not interested in a European fortress closed in its own self-interest, but in a continent which is becoming more stable and therefore better equipped to implement trade with other parts of the globe and to contribute to justice and peace in the world. The true point of interest is universal brotherhood and not the exclusive well being of one continent. I think of the debate about the values and problems of biotechnology: embryo and stem cell experiments and brain research. I think about the fact that in our post-ideological Europe the basic existential questions can be heard anew: Is there a meaning to life and history? Is there goodness, or someone to whom I can entrust my life because he can respond to my desire for existence, for happiness, for joy, for affection and for eternity? Are pain and death the last word for man and as such, the check on my every desire? Does pain have meaning? We mustn't forget that in 7 out of 8 European countries suicide accounts for the greatest percentage of the deaths of young people. Faced with these fundamental European questions we ask ourselves where the light, the source or the medicine, may be. Christianity has something essential to offer. Christians learn from their school desks, from the outset, of a love

which is the true secret to living together, that comes from the unexpected and scandalous story of Christ crucified. The Resurrection which lives with us until the end of time tells us that truth, love and beauty do exist; that evil and death don't have the last word; that there is meaning. The Resurrection holds open the blue sky over our countries, over our families and our lives. The Resurrection tells us that eternity does exist, paradise, and therefore life, continues into the light of eternity. It is not confined to the years which pass on this earth. Paradise is our true home. The prospect of eternity gives a completely new light to life. How can we bear witness to this good news for Europe?

Mons. Giordano, secretary of the *Council of European Episcopal Conferences*, December 2005

STRUCTURE AND SUGGESTIONS

This booklet has the same format as *Ecclesia in Europa*. The chapters in this booklet have the same titles as the six chapters of *Ecclesia in Europa*.

This booklet can be used in daily personal prayer. It can also be used in a group, by introducing one chapter, followed by a week or two weeks homework. Coming together again to share experiences and hear an introduction to the next chapter and so on. *Ecclesia in Europa* and this booklet can help to develop a vision and pastoral plans in your own situation.

Foreword

On behalf of the European sub-committee of ICCRS, I welcome you to this publication. We pray that you may find it a helpful resource individually or in a group setting. As you may know, an Apostolic Exhortation was published in each of the continents following their synod of bishops. Ecclesia in Europa encourages us to focus upon Jesus Christ alive in his Church, as the source of hope for Europe. The European situation is also something that Pope Benedict XVI has spoken about by highlighting the dangers of secularisation and relativism. Indeed, as a continent we face many challenges but Ecclesia in Europa encourages us not to be afraid but to be confident because we have hope in Jesus. We must also be certain that the Gospel of hope will not disappoint us.

It is the hope of the ICCRS sub-committee that through reading the document in a prayerful and reflective way you will also feel called to regularly pray for our continent and do what you can in your local situations to help proclaim that Jesus is indeed the hope of Europe.

The compiling of this booklet has involved good collaboration between brothers and sisters throughout Europe and we are particularly encouraged by the contribution of our young people who wrote the prayers. May you be blessed as you read, reflect and study.

With prayers and good wishes,

Michelle Moran,
chairperson of the European Sub-committee of ICCRS

INTRODUCTION

*Have no fear, nor be troubled, but in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defence to any one who calls you to account for the **hope** that is in you.*
(1 Peter 3:14-15)*

This booklet aims to help us prayerfully reflect upon John Paul II's exhortation on the Church in Europe. Daily readings will begin with a quote from the document, followed by references from Scripture or Church teaching and a prayer. The 'action responses' at the end of each chapter are ways of implementing what we have reflected upon. We now set the theme, in this introduction, with quotes from the exhortation and accompanying statements by Pope John Paul II.

The Church has the urgent task of bringing the liberating message of the Gospel to the men and women of Europe (...) to proclaim this message of hope to a Europe which seems to have lost sight of it. (EiE2)

"It is important to proclaim the Gospel as 'news', the 'Good News', totally centred on the person of Jesus, the Son of God and Redeemer of man. Catechesis must help people to 'meet' Jesus Christ, to converse with him and to immerse themselves in him. Without the vibrance of this encounter Christianity becomes a soulless religious traditionalism which easily yields to the attacks of secularism or the enticements of alternative religious offerings." (Pope John Paul II, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 17, Sept., 1999)

STARTING POINT: *the mystery of Christ and the Trinity (...)* to set forth once more the figure of Jesus, alive in his Church, who reveals God as Love, a communion of the three divine Persons. (EiE4)

"The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Holy Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity." (Pope John Paul II, *Catechesis in Our Time*, Catechesi Tradendae no.5, 1979)

The Book of Revelation contains a word of encouragement addressed to believers: beyond all appearances, and even if its effects are not yet seen, the victory of Christ has already taken place and is final. This in turn causes us to approach human situations and events with an attitude of fundamental trust, born of faith in the Risen One, present and at work in history. (EiE5)

It is recommended to read the quotations in this booklet in their context too. *Ecclesia in Europa* is in several languages on www.vatican.va and published in print in many languages by the national bishops' conferences.

EiE = Ecclesia in Europa
(...) = some words are left away.
IRS = Redemptionis Sacramentum

Bible quotations are taken from
The New Jerusalem Bible, published by DLT in 1990
and The Jerusalem Bible, published in 1968.

Chapter One JESUS CHRIST IS OUR HOPE

Fear not, I am the first and the last and the living one.
(Rev.1:17-18)

Day 1.1

We thus find ourselves before the Gospel, the ‘good news’, that is *Jesus Christ himself*. He is *the First and the Last*: in him all history finds its beginning, its meaning, its direction and its fulfillment. (EiE6)

Christ is the head of all creation (cf. Wisdom 7:26)

He is the image of the unseen God, the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible, thrones, ruling forces, sovereignties, powers – all things were created through him and for him.

He exists before all things and in him all things hold together, and he is the Head of the Body, that is, the Church.

He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, so that he should be supreme in every way; because God wanted all fullness to be found in him and through him to reconcile all things to him, everything in heaven and everything on earth, by making peace through his death on the cross. (Col 1:15-20)

PRAYER: Lord, You are above all powers, above all nations, above all rulers and you are my Saviour. You came on Earth to save me from my sins. Thank you for taking away my chains of sins and for giving me freedom. Help me to love you more and more each day.

Day 1.2

Many people are no longer able to integrate the Gospel message into their daily experience; living one’s faith in Jesus becomes increasingly difficult in a social and cultural setting in which faith is constantly challenged and threatened. (EiE7)

You may be quite sure that in the last days there will be some difficult times. People will be self-centred and avaricious, boastful, arrogant and rude; disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, irreligious; heartless and intractable; they will be slanderers, profligates, savages and enemies of everything that is good; they will be treacherous and reckless and demented by pride, preferring their own pleasure to God.

They will keep the outward appearance of religion but will have rejected the inner power of it. (2 Tim 3:1-5)

PRAYER: Lord, it is a challenging world I am living in. Nothing seems so easy any more. Lord, you are my only hope and my heart rests in You. I would like to ask you to come in the centre of this challenging world. Come and take your place.

Day 1.3

At the root of [the] loss of hope is an *attempt to promote a vision of man apart from God and apart from Christ* (...) European culture gives the impression of 'silent apostasy' on the part of people who have all they need and who live as if God does not exist. (EiE9)

So this I say to you and attest to you in the Lord, do not go on living the empty-headed life that the gentiles live Intellectually they are in the dark, and they are estranged from the life of God, because of the ignorance which is the consequence of closed minds. (Ephesians 4:17-18)

PRAYER: Lord, many people may live as if You do not exist, but I believe in You. You are my joy, my peace, my only treasure. Nothing compares to You. Please Lord, give me more of You, and hold me close to You as I want to walk the paths of life with You.

Day 1.4

Jesus Christ is our hope because he, the Eternal Word of God, who is always with the Father (cf. Jn 1:18), loved us so much that he assumed our human nature in all things but sin and shared in our life, for the sake of our salvation. The profession of this truth stands at the very heart of our faith. (EiE19)

For it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us; but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin. Let us be confident, then, in approaching the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of help. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

*The Word became flesh,
he lived among us,
and we saw his glory,
the glory that he has from the Father
as only Son of the Father,
full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)*

PRAYER: Lord, you are God most high, and yet you came to earth and lived among us to teach us your ways, to give us the good news of love, peace and truth. Thank you for this great love. Help me to understand your word and may I always give you the glory you deserve.

Day 1.5

The loss of the truth about Jesus Christ, or a failure to comprehend that truth, prevent us from appreciating and entering into the mystery of God's love and the Trinitarian communion. Jesus Christ is our hope because *he reveals the mystery of the Trinity* (EiE19)

The Church's Trinitarian faith contains an extraordinary spiritual, cultural and ethical potential which is also capable of shedding light on some of the more important questions discussed in Europe today, such as social disintegration and the loss of a meaningful point of reference for life and history. Hence the need for a renewed theological, spiritual and pastoral meditation on the mystery of the Trinity. (EiE19)

If anybody does not remain in the teaching of Christ but goes beyond it, he does not have God with him: only those who remain in what he taught can have the Father and the Son with them. (2 John 9)

PRAYER: Lord, I know you are the way, the truth and the life. Sometimes I tend to drift away from you. Teach me your ways and be my focus. Hold me close and never let me go.

Day 1.6

For believers, Jesus Christ is the hope of every person because *he grants eternal life*. He (...) came to the world so that men and women "may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10). He shows us that the true meaning of man's existence does not remain confined within the horizons of this world, but opens instead upon eternity. (EiE21)

And eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (John 17:3)

For this is how God loved the world: he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. (John 3:16)

For the wage paid by sin is death; the gift freely given by God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

PRAYER: Jesus, you loved us so much that you gave your life to save us and to give us eternal life. Please, help me to understand and appreciate more this great love you have for me. Let me be like a child in her father's arms to let you guide me wherever I go.

Day 1.7

Jesus is present, alive and at work in his Church. He is in the Church and the Church is in him (cf. Jn 15:1ff; Gal 3:28; Eph 4:15-16; Acts 9:5). In the Church, by virtue of the gift of the Holy Spirit, he unceasingly continues his saving work. (EiE22)

[How is Jesus present?] He is present first of all in Sacred Scripture; (...) in a unique way in the Eucharist; (...) in the other liturgical actions of the Church, such as the sacraments; (...) and through his disciples. (cf EiE22)

Remain in me, as I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, unless it remains part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. (John 15:4)

If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow completely into Christ, who is the head by whom the whole body is fitted and joined together, every joint adding its own strength, for each individual part to work according to its function. So the body grows until it has builds itself up in love. (Eph 4:15-16)

PRAYER: Jesus, you are my amazing loving friend. Help me to remain in you so that I can love you and my brothers and sisters on earth more and more each day of my life.

ACTION RESPONSE

“The Church has the task of reviving faith in the Trinity among the Christians of Europe, knowing full well that this faith is the herald of authentic hope for the continent.” (EiE19)

What about my faith in the Trinity?
Did I surrender myself to Christ?
Do I trust my heavenly Father?
Do I welcome the Holy Spirit in all parts of my being?
Do I spread the light of Christ in my lifestyle?

What possibilities and opportunities for people to find Christ as their Saviour and hope are created in the little part of Europe that I am living in?

What new evangelisation can Christians undertake in the area I am living in within a year?

“FAITH, in its deepest essence, is the openness of the human heart to the gift: to God’s self-communication in the Holy Spirit.” (John Paul II, Dominum et Vivificantem, 51)

My own action points in the next weeks are:

Chapter Two

THE GOSPEL OF HOPE ENTRUSTED TO THE CHURCH OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Awake, and strengthen what is on the point of death. (Rev.3:2)

Day 2.1

It is *Jesus himself who speaks to his Church*. His message is addressed to all the individual Particular Churches and concerns their inner life, which is at times marked by the presence of ideas and ways of thinking incompatible with the Gospel tradition, frequently subjected to different forms of persecution and, what is yet more dangerous, beset by troubling symptoms of worldliness, the loss of an earlier faith, and compromise with the 'logic' of the world. (EiE23)

I urge you, then, brothers, remembering the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, dedicated and acceptable to God (...) Do not model your behaviour on the contemporary world, but let the renewing of your minds transform you, so that you may discern for yourselves what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and mature. (Rom 12:1-2)

PRAYER: Lord, give me courage to remain in truth, to hold on in faith when I am in persecutions and difficulties. Don't let anyone separate me from you, in your Spirit renew my heart and attitude of mind so that I stay in your ways and my life would be dedicated and acceptable to you.

Day 2.2

The serious situation of indifference towards religion on the part of so many Europeans, the presence of many people on our continent who do not yet know Jesus Christ and his Church and who are not baptized, the secularism which poisons a wide spectrum of Christians who habitually think, make decisions and live, as if Christ did not exist', far from extinguishing our hope, make this hope more humble and more able to trust in God alone. It is from his mercy that we receive *the grace and call to conversion*. (EiE26)

I know all about you: how you are reputed to be alive and yet are dead. Wake up; revive what little you have left: it is dying fast. So far I have failed to notice anything in the way you live that my God could possibly call perfect, and yet, do you remember how eager you were when you first heard the message? Hold on to that. Repent (Revelations 3:1c-3b)

PRAYER: Holy Spirit, fill my heart with humble hope and help me to turn to Jesus in my weaknesses. Fill my heart with joyful hope so that I would be raring to show and to share hope that lives in me when I meet indifference and hopelessness.

Day 2.3

The Gospel continues to bear fruit in parish communities, among consecrated persons, in lay associations, in groups devoted to prayer and the apostolate and in various youth communities, as well as through the presence and growth of new movements and ecclesial realities. In each of them the one Spirit finds ways of awakening renewed dedication to the Gospel, generous openness to the service of others, and a Christian life marked by Gospel radicalism and missionary zeal. (EiE15)

Foster a climate of fraternal charity, lived with Gospel radicalism in the name of Jesus and in his love.”(EiE28) “Make the most of the variety of charisms and vocations (...)”“The new movements and the new ecclesial communities must (...) advance along the path of more authentic communion between themselves and with all other ecclesial realities, (...) (EiE29)

So if in Christ there is anything that will move you, any incentive in love, any fellowship in the Spirit, any warmth or sympathy – I appeal to you, make my joy complete by being of a single mind, one in love, one in heart and one in mind. Nothing is to be done out of jealousy or vanity; instead, out of humility of mind everyone should give preference to others, everyone pursuing not selfish interests but those of others. (Phil 2:1-4)

PRAYER: Holy Spirit, I pray, increase charisms and vocations among us, so that we can share your gifts with others in our Church. Help us to see that our differences adorn your Kingdom. Strengthen unity in our Church and fellowship with

other Churches. Let brotherly love, sincerity, agreement and obedience be our aim, so that your Church can be a sign of hope for the world.

Day 2.4

In today's Europe too, both in the post- Communist countries and in the West, *the parish*, while in need of constant renewal, continues to maintain and to carry out its particular mission, which is indispensable and of great relevance for pastoral care and the life of the Church. The parish is still a setting where the faithful are offered opportunities for genuine Christian living and a place for authentic human interaction and socialization, whether in the situations of dispersion and anonymity typical of large modern cities or in areas which are rural and sparsely populated. (EiE15)

Jesus: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field (...) his enemy came, sowed darnel among the wheat (...). The owner said: when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest; ..." (Matthew 13:24-30)

I know all about you: how you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other, (Revelations 3:15)

PRAYER: Father, we ask for your grace to renew our Parish communities. Let the unity, love and passion for your will show the world the beauty of your Kingdom and the victory over loneliness, depression and indifference to our neighbours.

Day 2.5

As men who are 'in' the world yet not 'of' the world (cf. Jn 17:15-16), priests are called in Europe's present cultural and spiritual situation to be a sign of contradiction and of hope for a society suffering from 'horizontalism' and in need of openness to the Transcendent. (EiE34)

[Jesus prayed to the Father:] I passed your word on to them, and the world hated them, because they belong to the world no more than I belong to the world.

I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from the Evil One. (...)

Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth.

As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. (John 17:14-18)

PRAYER: Jesus Christ, I pray for new vocations to the priesthood all over Europe and for the priests we have. Give them your courage and wisdom in their ministry, desire and zeal to spread your Good News and help them to be a sign of contradiction and hope for the world.

Day 2.6

The contribution of the lay faithful to the life of the Church is essential: they have an irreplaceable role in the proclamation and the service of the Gospel of hope, (...). As full sharers in the Church's mission in the world, they are called to testify that the Christian faith constitutes the only complete response to the questions which life sets before every individual and every society, and they are able to imbue the world with the values of the Kingdom of God. (EiE41)

You are light for the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in people's sight, so that, seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven. (Mt 5:14-16)

I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

PRAYER: Jesus, I pray for lay people, for those who are in the world as you lights. Make them the people of hope who would be witnesses of you – the Only Way. Increase their desire to live only for you and teach them to live a life to the full so that their joy and hope impel others to come to you.

Day 2.7

The Church is very much aware of the specific contribution of *women* in service of the Gospel of hope. (EiE42) ... the dignity of women must be promoted above all *in the Church*, inasmuch as woman and man enjoy equal dignity, for both have been created in the image and likeness of God (cf. *Gen 1:27*) and each has been given proper and specific gifts. It is to be hoped (...) that the full participation of women in the Church's life and mission will be fostered by making better use of their gifts and by entrusting them with ecclesial roles reserved by law to laypersons. (EiE43)

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchræe; give her, in the Lord, a welcome worthy of God's holy people, and help her with whatever she needs from you – she herself has come to the help of many people, including myself. (Rom 16:1-2)

With Jesus went the Twelve, as well as certain women (...): Mary surnamed the Magdalene, (...), Joanna the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them out of their own resources. (Luke 8:2-3)

PRAYER: Father, you created man and woman in your image and likeness. You created them different in their gifts and abilities but equal in dignity. Help me to understand how much you value a co-operation between man and woman; help me to see this collaboration as you see it. I pray courage for women to participate in the Church's life and mission and courage to take responsibility according to their gifts and abilities.

ACTION RESPONSE

There is a need 'to rekindle a deep yearning for God, especially in young people, thus creating a suitable context in which generous vocational responses can be made'; it is urgent that a great movement of prayer spread across the ecclesial Communities of the European continent ... (EiE40)

How do we foster this great movement of prayer in daily life and in special periods like Lent, the nine days before Pentecost and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity?

How can I serve with the charisms I have received, in my family, parish and community? What is my own vocation? What do young people need to find their vocation? How can I support them?

What is my support to the priests?

"The different Particular Churches in Europe, (...) should create cordial relationships, communication, shared responsibility and participation, missionary consciousness, concern and readiness to serve." (EiE28)

What can be my contribution to this?

My own action points in the next weeks are:

Chapter Three
PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL OF HOPE

*"Go, take the scroll which is open (...)
take it and eat." (Rev.10:8,9)*

Day 3.1

Europe is now one of those traditionally Christian places which, in addition to a new evangelization, require in some cases a first evangelization (EiE46)

A renewed proclamation is needed even for those already baptized. Many Europeans today think they know what Christianity is, yet they do not really know it at all. Often they are lacking in knowledge of the most basic elements and notions of the faith. Many of the baptized live as if Christ did not exist: the gestures and signs of faith are repeated, especially in devotional practices, but they fail to correspond to a real acceptance of the content of the faith and fidelity to the person of Jesus. (EiE47)

Always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you have. (1 Pet 3:15)

PRAYER: Father, open our eyes to the Truth, open our hearts to learn, see and become more like You, give us strength to evangelise.

I pray for all Christians and non-believers, that they may feel Your love for them and grow close to You. Because You are THE way, THE truth and THE life. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Day 3.2

"When the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (Lk 18:8). Will he find faith (...) in this Europe of ancient Christian tradition? (...) This challenge frequently consists not so much in baptizing new converts as in enabling those already baptized to be converted to Christ and his Gospel. (EiE47)

*This people honors me only with lip service,
while their hearts are far from me.
The worship they offer me is worthless;
the doctrines they teach are only human regulations.
(Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:8-9)*

But remember, my dear friends, what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. 'At the final point of time', they told you, 'there will be mockers who follow nothing but their own godless desires.' It is they who cause division, who live according to nature and do not possess the Spirit. (Jude 17-19)

PRAYER: Father, I pray that people would make a radical decision in choosing for You. Make our hearts humble oh Lord, that we can give things up for You and feel that our certainty is in You. Lord increase our faith. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Day 3.3

The Church's *preaching*, in all its forms, *must be increasingly centred on the person of Jesus* and increasingly converge on him. Vigilant care must be taken that *Christ is presented in his fullness*; not merely as an ethical model, but above all as the Son of God, the one, necessary Saviour of all, who lives and is at work in his Church. (EiE48)

Only in him is there salvation; for of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved. (Acts 4:11b-12)

And for this God raised him high, and gave him the name which is above all other names; so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:9-11)

PRAYER: Father, You gave us the most amazing gift: Your only Son. I pray, we may feel Your wonderful love deep in our hearts. That we may see Jesus as our true and only Saviour and give Him the first place in our lives, so we can give Him all honour and glory through the things we do, every day of our life. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Day 3.4

Our contemporaries 'listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.' (...) *holiness is the essential prerequisite for an authentic evangelization* capable of reviving hope. What is needed are forceful, personal and communal testimonies of new life in Christ. It is not enough that truth and grace are offered through the proclamation of the word and the celebration of the sacraments; **they need to be accepted and experienced in every practical situation, in the way Christians and ecclesial communities lead their lives. (EiE49)**

We too were all among them once, living only by our natural inclinations, obeying the demands of human self-indulgence and our own whim; our nature made us no less liable to God's retribution than the rest of the world. But God, being rich in faithful love, through the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our sins, brought us to life with Christ- it is by grace that you have been saved- and raised us up with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus. (Eph 2:3-6)

PRAYER: Lord, help us to take up our responsibilities and make our hearts open, willing and serving for You. I pray that we would look more at You and not at our weaknesses, so that our lives can become living testimonies. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Day 3.5

The proclamation of the Gospel of hope thus implies concern to *foster the movement* from a faith supported by social tradition, important as this is, to *a more personal and adult faith*, one marked by knowledge and conviction. (EiE50)

So, then, as you received Jesus as Lord and Christ, now live your lives in him, be rooted in him and built up on him, held firm by the faith you have been taught, and overflowing with thanksgiving. Make sure that no one captivates you with the empty lure of a 'philosophy' of the kind that human beings hand on, based on the principles of this world and not on Christ. (Col 2:6-8)

PRAYER: We pray for more faith, hope and wisdom from you Lord. That we might grow more in our relationship with you and carry your Word in our hearts, so we can enlarge our knowledge and conviction of you. Also, that we can experience and explain the hope we have in you to the people around us. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Day 3.6

The power of the proclamation of the Gospel of hope will be all the more effective if it is linked to the witness of a profound unity and communion in the Church. (EiE53)

The duty of fraternal and committed *ecumenical cooperation* also emerges as an irrevocable

imperative. The future of evangelization is closely linked to the witness of unity given by all Christ's followers: "All Christians are called to carry out this mission in accordance with their vocation. The task of evangelization involves moving towards one another and moving forward together as Christians, ..." (EiE54)... there is need for acknowledgment of the common roots linking Christianity and the Jewish people, who are called by God to a covenant which remains irrevocable (cf. *Rom 11:29*) and has attained definitive fullness in Christ. Consequently it is necessary to encourage dialogue with Judaism, knowing that it is fundamentally important for the self-knowledge of Christians and for the transcending of divisions between the Churches, ... (EiE56)

Brothers, I urge you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, not to have factions among yourselves but all to be in agreement in what you profess, so that you are perfectly united in all your beliefs and judgements. (1 Cor 1:10)

Make my joy complete by being of a single mind, one in love, one in heart and one in mind. (Phil 2:1-2)

PRAYER: Lord, we pray that all Christians may be united in You, Lord. That we would become one in love, one in heart and one in mind. So that through this unity the proclamation of the Gospel would be very powerful and effective. In Jesus name we pray, Amen

Day 3.7

“Church in Europe, enter the new millennium with the Book of the Gospels! May every member of the faithful hear the Council’s plea “to learn the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ (Phil 3:8) by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. ‘Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ’.” May the Holy Bible continue to be a treasure for the Church and for every Christian (...) Let us take up this book! Let us receive it from the Lord who continually offers it to us through his Church (cf. Rev 10:8). Let us devour it (cf. Rev 10:9), so that it can become our very life (...) Filled with hope, we will be able to share it with every man and woman whom we encounter on our way.” (EiE65)

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for refuting error, for guiding people’s lives and teaching them to be upright. (2 Tim 3:16)

PRAYER: Lord we thank you for the mighty gift you gave us: the Holy Bible.

We pray that our ignorance may change in to a big hunger in our hearts to read, learn and know more of your Word. Give us the desire to take up The Holy Bible and absorb every word of it. Make our hearts and minds open to understand it.

ACTION RESPONSE

Who is Jesus for me? Can I explain the most basic elements and notions of the faith to another?

How far has my parish moved from social tradition to a more personal expression of faith? What will be my contribution to this ongoing process?

Do I move towards other Christians for ecumenical encounters? Do I also move forward together with other Christians? (cf EiE 54)
Dialogue with Judaism is fundamentally important for the self-knowledge of Christians and for the transcending of divisions between the Churches. See day 6. Pope John Paul II continues in EiE 56: 'and to work for the flowering of a new springtime in mutual relations. This demands that each ecclesial community engage, to the extent that circumstances permit, in dialogue and cooperation with believers of the Jewish religion. This engagement also implies that “acknowledgment be given to any part which the children of the Church have had in the growth and spread of antisemitism in history; forgiveness must be sought for this from God, and every effort must be made to favour encounters of reconciliation and of friendship with the sons of Israel”. It will likewise be appropriate to mention the many Christians who, sometimes at the cost of their lives, helped and saved, especially in times of persecution, these their “elder brethren”.'

Do I know the now-a-days teaching of my Church on our link with the Jewish people? What can I do in prayer, in study, and for encounters, reconciliation and friendship?

My own action points in the next weeks are:

Chapter Four CELEBRATING THE GOSPEL OF HOPE

"To Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might for ever and ever!" (Rev.5:13)

Day 4.1

In the context of today's society, often closed to transcendence, oppressed by consumeristic behaviour (...) yet at the same time thirsting for something that goes beyond the immediate, the *task that awaits the Church in Europe* (...) consists in rediscovering the sense of 'mystery' (...). For this reason, I urgently invite you, *the Church living in Europe: be a Church that prays, praises God, recognizing his absolute primacy, magnifying him with joyful faith.* (EiE69)

Do not get drunk with wine; this is simply dissipation; be filled with the Spirit. Sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs among yourselves, singing and chanting to the Lord in your hearts, always and everywhere giving thanks to God who is our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph 5:15-20)

PRAYER: Dear God, we ask you to change our heart to a heart which is thirsty for knowing you better, and wants to praise you with joyful faith. Engrave your love in our hearts so that we can magnify your holiness, mightiness and mercy.

Day 4.2

... renewing liturgical celebrations so that they can be more eloquent signs of the presence of Christ the Lord ... (EiE69)

It is (...) *urgent that the sense of mystery be revived in the Church* (...) As the tradition of the venerable Eastern Churches also clearly emphasizes, it is through the liturgy that the faithful enter into communion with the Most Holy Trinity and experience their sharing in the divine nature as a gift of grace. In this way the liturgy becomes a foretaste of final blessedness and a sharing in the glory of heaven. (EiE70)

*You prepared a table before me,
under the eyes of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil,
my cup brims over. (Psalm 23:5)*

*Happy are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.
(Revelations 19:9)*

PRAYER: Holy Spirit, help us to revive the sense of mystery in our life and let your Church be a community of those people who love to experience you through the liturgy.

Day 4.3

Liturgical celebrations need once more to put Jesus at the centre, so that we can be enlightened and guided by him. (...) The purpose of the liturgy of the Church is not to placate people's desires or fears, but to hear and receive the living Jesus, who honours and praises the Father, in order that we may praise and honour the Father with him. The Church's celebrations proclaim that our hope comes to us from God through Jesus our Lord. (EiE71)

For where two or three meet in my name. I shall be there with them. (Matthew 18:20)

For in the celebration of the Eucharist, as in the whole Christian life which draws its power from it and leads toward it, the Church, after the manner of St. Thomas the Apostle, prostrates herself in adoration before the Lord who was crucified, suffered and died, was buried and arose, and perpetually exclaims to him who is clothed in the fullness of divine splendour: "My Lord and my God!" (IRS,40)

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, you are our Lord and our God, our Saviour, our Healer, our Shepherd. You are the Light, the Resurrection and the Life. You are the Way, you are the Truth and the Real Vine. Jesus, please enlighten and guide us so that we can praise and honour the Father - who loves us with never-ending love.

Day 4.4

A prominent place need to be given to the *celebration of the sacraments* (...). In the knowledge that in them Christ himself is acting through the Holy Spirit, the sacraments should be celebrated with the greatest care and under appropriate conditions. (...) Many of the baptized, following customs and traditional practices, continue to have recourse to the Sacraments at significant moments of their life, yet do not live in accordance with the Church's teaching. (EiE74)

... the Lord Jesus took some bread, and after he had given thanks, he broke it, and he said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' And in the same way, with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me.' Whenever you eat this bread, then, and drink this cup, you are proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, anyone who eats the bread or drinks the cup unworthily is answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. (1 Cor 11:23-27)

PRAYER: Jesus, we pray for those who are baptized, but do not yet live in accordance with the teaching of the Church. Please help all of us to recognize those moments, when we do not take seriously and reverently the receiving of your body and blood in the Eucharist.

Day 4.5

The Eucharist, the greatest gift of Christ to the Church, makes present in mystery the sacrifice of Christ offered for our salvation (...) The Eucharist is a 'taste of eternity within time', it is God's presence and our communion with that presence (...), it is by its very nature a bearer of grace within human history. It opens us to the future of God; (...) it is a sharing in God's own eternal life. (EiE75)

The blessing-cup, which we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ; and the loaf of bread which we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? (1 Cor 10:16)

Everyone is to examine himself and only then eat of the bread or drink from the cup; because a person who eats and drinks without recognizing the body is eating and drinking his own condemnation. (1 Cor 11:28-29)

PRAYER: Jesus, thank you for your greatest gift to the Church, your body the Eucharist. Thank you for your sacrifice offered for our salvation. Thank you, Jesus for your presence in the Eucharist, with which you give power for our life. Help us to live a joyful and hopeful life.

Day 4.6

Along with the Eucharist, the Sacrament of *Reconciliation* must also exercise a *fundamental role in the recovery of hope*: "a personal experience of the forgiveness of God for each one of us is, in fact, the essential foundation of every hope for our future". One of the roots of the hopelessness that assails many people today is found in their inability to see themselves as sinners and to allow themselves to be forgiven, ... (EiE76)

If we acknowledge our sins, then God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and purify us from everything that is wrong. To say that we have never sinned is to call God a liar and to show that his word is not in us. (1 John 1:9-10)

*For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven;
For those whose sins you retain they are retained.
(John 20:23)*

PRAYER: Help us Lord to recognize the sins in our life that separate us from your love. Help us Lord to repent our sins, and not to be afraid of telling you our offences. Help us Lord to rely on your mercy and in this way we experience the real joy of freedom.
Help us Lord to forgive others and to apologise.

Day 4.7

Together with the celebration of the Eucharist, there is also a need to promote other forms of *community prayer* (...).

Every form of community prayer presupposes individual prayer. Between the individual and God there arises that true converse which finds expression in praise, thanksgiving and petition addressed to the Father through Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit. Personal prayer, which is as it were the very breath of the Christian, should never be neglected. There is also a need to help the faithful to rediscover the link between this personal prayer and liturgical prayer. (EiE78)

When you pray, go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:6)

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, you taught us how to pray, when you told us to pray “Our Father ...”.

You showed us how to pray alone, when you went up the hill to talk with your Father. You gave us an example of how to pray in the community, when you prayed with the apostles.

Thank you Holy Spirit, that you help us to pray in our “private room” – even when we do not know how to pray, you are pleading for us through our inarticulate groans. (Rom 8,26)

And thank you God, that you lead us into community and urge us to be members of the Church, who pray not just alone, but also in the community through the liturgy.

ACTION RESPONSE

What is the active participation of my own heart during Eucharist? Do I really ask forgiveness, hear the Word, offer my life (cf. *Rom 12:1*), receive His power and accept my mission?

How can we fulfill the task that 'consists in rediscovering the sense of “mystery”; in renewing liturgical celebrations so that they can be more eloquent signs of the presence of Christ the Lord; in ensuring greater silence in prayer and in contemplation' ? (EiE69) What can foster the sense of mystery in my own parish or community?

Rediscover the sense of mystery: live it with humble gratitude; testify to it with conviction and contagious joy. *Celebrate the salvation which comes from Christ:* welcome it as a gift which makes of you its sacrament; make your life a true spiritual worship pleasing to God (cf. *Rom 12:1*). (EiE69)

Foster “an understanding of the true meaning of the Church’s liturgical celebrations [with] an *adequate instruction in the rites.*” (EiE73) Do I need more instruction? Am I able to give an adequate explanation of the liturgy to those who are less familiar with it?

My own action points in the next weeks are:

Chapter Five SERVING THE GOSPEL OF HOPE

*"I know your works, your love and faith and service
and patient endurance" (Rev 2:19)*

Day 5.1

The word which the Spirit speaks to the Churches contains a *judgment about their life*. It concerns facts and forms of conduct. "*I know your works*" (...). If those works prove positive, it is because they are the result of effort, constancy, endurance in trial and tribulation, poverty, fidelity in time of persecution, charity, faith and service. The letters can thus be read as the description of a Church which (...) concretely "lives" [the salvation].

In order to serve the Gospel of hope, *the Church in Europe is also called to follow the path of love*. This path takes the form of a charity which evangelizes (...) and a decision for a generosity which is persevering and knows no limits. (EiE83)

*I know all about you and how charitable you are; I know your faith and devotion and how much you put up with, and I know how you are still making progress.
(Rev 2:19)*

PRAYER: Lord, make me follow the path of love, serving the Gospel of Hope without looking for my interests, but in true charity and love for those who are around me.

Day 5.2

For every person, charity received and given is the *primordial experience which gives rise to hope*. "Man cannot live without hope. (...) The challenge for the Church in Europe today consists, therefore, in helping contemporary man to experience the love of God the Father and of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, through the witness of charity, which possesses an intrinsic power of evangelization. (EiE84)

And all who shared the faith owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and distributed the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

Each day, with one heart, they regularly went to the Temple but met in their houses for the breaking of the bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. (Acts 2:44-47a)

PRAYER: Lord, make me into an instrument of the Gospel in your Church. Help me to receive the love of the Father and share this with others.

Day 5.3

In the end this is the real meaning of the “Gospel” (...): God first loved us (cf. 1 Jn 4: 10, 19) and Jesus has loved us to the end (cf. Jn 13:1). Thanks to the gift of the Spirit, God's love is offered to believers, enabling them to become sharers in his own capacity to love: it becomes a powerful force in the heart of every disciple and in all the Church (cf. 2 Cor 5:14). (EiE84)

I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put my spirit in you, and make you keep my laws, and respect and practise my judgements. (Ezekiel 36: 26-27)

The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. (Romans 5:5)

PRAYER: Lord, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, change my life. Remove the heart of stone and give me a heart of flesh, so that I can serve the Gospel of Hope covered by the strength of your love.

Day 5.4

It is the vocation of the Church, as a ‘credible sign – even if imperfect – of an (...) experiential love, to lead men and women to an encounter with the love of God and Christ, who comes in search of them’. (...) *Ecclesial communities* are called to be true *training-grounds for communion*. By its very nature the witness of charity must extend beyond the confines of ecclesial communities and reach out to everyone, so that *love for everyone* can become a stimulus to authentic solidarity in every part of society. (...) In this context we need to *rediscover the authentic meaning of Christian volunteerism*. (EiE85)

But the man (...) said: ‘Who is my neighbour?’ In answer Jesus said, ‘A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of bandits; they stripped him, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest (...) a Levite [and] Samaritan traveler (...) saw him. (...) Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour (...)? He replied, “The one who showed pity towards him.” Jesus said to him, “Go, and do the same yourself.” (Luke 10:29-37)

PRAYER: Lord, in a society focussed on social selfishness, where I do not always remember that those around me need help, make me able to serve the Gospel of Hope. Help me to take your love to men and women who do not always look for you, even though you continue to reach out to them.

Day 5.5

Preferential love for the poor is a necessary dimension of Christian existence and service to the Gospel. To love the poor, and to testify that they are especially loved by God, means acknowledging that persons have value in themselves, apart from their economic, cultural and social status, and helping them make the most of their potential. (EiE86)

Due importance must also be given to ***the pastoral care of the sick***. Since sickness is a situation which raises fundamental questions about the meaning of life, 'in a prosperous and efficient society, in a culture characterized by idolatry of the body, dismissal of suffering and pain and by the myth of perennial youth', the care of the sick is to be considered a priority. (EiE88)

... to share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor, to clothe the man you see to be naked and not turn from your own kin? (Isaiah 58:7)

PRAYER: Lord, make me able to serve the Gospel of Hope, loving the poor and taking the good news to those that do not know you. May they know how important they are to God the Father.

Day 5.6

The Church is called to proclaim with renewed vigour what the Gospel teaches about marriage and the family, in order to grasp their meaning and value in God's saving plan. (...) There is a need to rediscover the truth about the family as an intimate communion of life and love open to the procreation of new persons, as well as its dignity as a "domestic Church" and its share in the mission of the Church and in the life of society. (EiE90)

At the same time the Church will need, with maternal concern, to provide assistance to those who are in difficult situations, such as single mothers, the separated, the divorced, and abandoned children. (EiE91)

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and the two become one flesh. This mystery has great significance, but I am applying it to Christ and the Church. To sum up: you also, each one of you, must love his wife as he loves himself; and let every wife respect her husband. (Eph 5:31-33)

PRAYER: Lord, give me the grace to recognise and accept my vocation according to your will. I pray that married people would have the grace to live in the mystery of Holy Matrimony.

Day 5.7

A charity which bears fruit in works makes us committed to hastening the coming of the future Kingdom. (...) As the Second Vatican Council recalled: “Christians, on pilgrimage towards the heavenly city, should seek and savour the things which are above. This duty in no way decreases, but rather increases, the weight of their obligation to work with all people in building a more human world”. (...) Though it is impossible to create within history a perfect social order, we know that God blesses every sincere effort to build a better world, and that every seed of justice and love planted in the present will bear fruit for eternity. (EiE97)

Build houses, settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce; take wives and have sons and daughters so that these can bear sons and daughters; you must increase there and not decrease. Work for the good of the country to which I have exiled you; pray the LORD on its behalf, since on its welfare yours depends. (Jeremiah 29:5-9)

PRAYER: Lord, give us the grace to work towards building a better society and world so that your kingdom can be more perfectly established here on earth.

ACTION RESPONSE

In what way am I 'helping contemporary man to experience the love of God (EiE84)'? What can you do, together with other Christians in your living place?

'Rediscover the authentic meaning of Christian volunteerism. Born of and continually nourished by faith, Christian volunteer work should combine professional skills and genuine love (EiE85)'

What can I do 'to search out people's needs and, where necessary, to set out on new paths where needs are greater but care and support weaker (EiE85)'?

To all Christian families living on this continent of Europe: (...) you have a “mission to guard, reveal, and communicate love (...)” (EiE94). What more can I do to fulfil this mission?

Do we have good *services of welcome* and *pastoral attention* for immigrants and refugees? And *pastoral care to the integration of Catholic immigrants*, with respect for their culture and their distinct religious traditions? (Cf. EiE103)

How can we share our goods in Europe? How can the West help the East, and the East help the West? What can Europe share with Africa and what can we learn from them?

What more can we do for the spiritual poor?

My own action points in the next weeks are:

Chapter Six
**THE GOSPEL OF HOPE FOR A
NEW EUROPE**

“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven” (Rev 21:2)

Day 6.1

The newness of God (...) consists in leaving behind the state of sin and its consequences in which humanity finds itself (...) (EiE106)

This newness begins to take shape first of all *in the Christian community* (...) in whose midst God is already at work, renewing the life of all who yield to the Spirit’s breath. (EiE107)

Be guided by the Spirit, and you will no longer yield to self-indulgence. The desires of self-indulgence are always in opposition to the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are in opposition to self-indulgence (...) the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control (...) All who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified self with all its passions and its desires. (Gal 5:16-17,22,24)

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we pray that your new life takes shape in our own lives and in our Christian community through your Spirit. Send your Spirit among us to guide us so that we are no longer yielded to self-indulgence and its works, but our lives show the fruit of your Spirit.

Day 6.2

The history of the European continent has been distinctively marked by the life-giving influence of the Gospel. (...) There can be no doubt that the Christian faith belongs, in a radical and decisive way, to the foundations of European culture, impressing upon it certain basic values. Modern Europe itself, which has given the democratic ideal and human rights to the world, draws its values from its Christian heritage. More than a geographical area, Europe can be described as ‘*a primarily cultural and historical concept*, which denotes a reality born as a continent thanks also to the unifying force of Christianity, (...)’ Today's Europe however, (...) seems to suffer from a profound crisis of values (...) it gives the impression of lacking the energy needed to sustain a common project and to give its citizens new reasons for hope. (EiE108)

You say to yourself, “I am rich, I have made a fortune, and have everything I want,” never realizing that you are wretchedly and pitifully poor, and blind and naked too. (Revelations 3:17)

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we pray that Europe will rediscover how much its culture and values are founded on Christianity and realize its spiritual poverty. Also, that Europe will turn back to the faith which shaped it and be able to give hope to its citizens.

Day 6.3

“Europe is called above all to rediscover its true identity. Even though it has developed into a highly diversified reality, it needs to build a new model of unity in diversity, as a community of reconciled nations open to the other continents and engaged in the present process of globalization.

Europe must “recognize and reclaim (...) those fundamental values (...), which can be summarized in the affirmation of the transcendent dignity of the human person, the value of reason, freedom, democracy, the constitutional state and the distinction between political life and religion”. (EiE109)

“For me there are no forbidden things”; maybe, but not everything does good. I agree there are no forbidden things for me, but I am not going to let anything dominate me. (1 Cor. 6:12)

You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; behave as children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and uprightness and truth. Try to discover what the Lord wants of you. (Eph 5: 8-10)

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we pray that Europe will respond to its call to rediscover its true identity, and will express this in its law and life. For our selves we pray that we behave as children of light, so that the people around us see our uprightness and see us doing what God wants from us.

Day 6.4

Europe cannot close in on itself. It cannot and must not lose interest in the rest of the world. (...) other continents await its bold initiatives, in order to offer to poorer peoples the means for their growth and social organization, and to build a more just and fraternal world. (EiE111)

Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time. (Mt 28:18-20)

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we pray that Europe will not lose its interest in the rest of the world, but will open up to the other continents. That through the initiatives it takes the world will be led to the Father and observe all your commands.

Day 6.5

Europe needs a *religious dimension* (...), it must open itself to the workings of God (...) human effort will be of no avail unless it is accompanied by divine assistance: for 'unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain' (Ps 127:1). (EiE116)

Those who are living by their natural inclinations have their minds on the things human nature desires; those who live in the Spirit have their minds on spiritual things. And human nature has nothing to look forward to but death, while the Spirit looks forward to life and peace, because the outlook of disordered human nature is opposed to God, since it does not submit to God's law, and indeed it cannot, and those who live by their natural inclinations can never be pleasing to God.

You, however, live not by your natural inclinations, but by the Spirit, since the Spirit of God has made a home in you. Indeed, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. (Rom 8:5-9)

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we pray that Europe will acknowledge you as Lord and 'the Builder of the house'. That the actions it undertakes are in your Spirit and not coming forth from the desires of human nature. Help us to live our lives with a mind set on your things, and then your house will be built in Europe.

Day 6.6

The Church feels it her duty to repeat vigourously the message of hope entrusted to her by God and says again to Europe: '*The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty Saviour!*' (Zeph 3:17). Her invitation to hope is not based on a utopian ideology; on the contrary, it is the timeless message of salvation proclaimed by Christ (cf. Mk 1:15). (...) **Europe, as you stand at the beginning of the third millennium, "Open the doors to Christ! Be yourself. Rediscover your origins. Relive your roots". (EiE120)**

When that Day comes, the message for Jerusalem will be: Zion, have no fear, do not let your hands fall limp. The LORD your God is there with you, the warrior-Saviour.

He will rejoice over you with happy song, he will renew you by his love, he will dance with shouts of joy for you, as on a day of festival. (Zeph 3:16-17)

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we pray that our churches will not stop proclaiming the message of hope and salvation. Strengthen your church with the knowledge that you are with us as our Saviour and that you rejoice over us.

Day 6.7

[Europe,] do not be afraid! The Gospel is not against you, but for you (...) Christian inspiration is capable of transforming political, cultural and economic groupings into a form of coexistence in which all Europeans will feel at home and will form a family of nations (...)
Be confident! In the Gospel, which is Jesus, you will find the sure and lasting hope to which you aspire. This hope is grounded in the victory of Christ over sin and death. He wishes this victory to be your own, for your salvation and your joy. **Be certain! The Gospel of hope does not disappoint!** (...) it is the invitation to everyone, believers and non-believers alike, to blaze new trails leading to a “Europe of the spirit”, in order to make the continent a true “common home” filled with the joy of life. (EiE121)

So for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old order is gone and a new being is there to see. It is all God's work; he reconciled us to himself through Christ and he gave us the ministry of reconciliation. (2Cor.5:17-19)

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we pray that Europe may rediscover its interest in the Gospel and find in it the sure and lasting hope. That the victory of Christ may become more of a reality. Help us to reconcile Europe with the Father and see the new creation.

ACTION RESPONSE

How 'to build a new model of unity in diversity, as a community of reconciled nations open to the other continents' (EiE109) What can I do in prayer and study, for encounters of reconciliation and friendship?

'To carry out this mission adequately will demand “rethinking international cooperation in terms of a new culture of solidarity.” (EiE111)

How can I cultivate a real Christian lifestyle?

What about my Christian integrity, when I am shopping, electing, dealing with money, defending economical privileges, watching television, writing letters, supporting petitions etc.

'The *presence of Christians*, properly trained and competent, is needed in the various European agencies and institutions, in order to contribute – with respect for the correct dynamics of democracy and through an exchange of proposals – to the shaping of a European social order which is increasingly respectful of every man and woman (...)' (EiE117)

Do I receive the proper training? Do I know enough about the social teaching of the Church? Do I support properly trained Christians in European institutions and in the public debate?

An important role in the growth of this unity can be played by *continental organizations of ecclesial communion*, which need to be further encouraged. (EiE118) How can I encourage these European organizations? How can I participate?

My own action points in the next weeks are:

Conclusion

PRAYER TO JESUS

'Risen and living Lord, you are the new hope of the Church and of humanity. You are the one true hope for the human family and for history. Already in this life, and in the life to come you are "among us the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). In you and with you, we find truth: our life has meaning, communion is possible, diversity can become richness, and the power of the kingdom is at work in history and helps to build the city of mankind. Love gives an eternal value to human efforts. Suffering becomes salvific, life will conquer death, creation will share in the glory of the children of God' (EiE18)

CALL TO MARY

**Mary, Mother of hope,
accompany us on our journey!**

(...) With you we say:

"Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:20). (EiE125)

"Faith...is neither an abstract discourse nor a vague religious sentiment, but a personal encounter with Christ who gives new meaning to life." (Pope John Paul II, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 17 Aug, 1999)

PRAYER FOR EUROPE

Come Holy Spirit, Europe is longing for You.

Make us aware, of our sins and our wounds.
Come in our memories. Come with Your healing power.

We are wounded nations. We are wounded people.
We are a wounded continent. Come with Your healing power.

Spirit of God, Spirit of Jesus, Spirit of hope,
come with Your healing power.

We want to live reconciled. We want to forgive everyone.
We want to live reconciled. Come with Your healing power.
You are our only hope.

*This prayer can be sung.
The music is on www.kcv-net.nl/stucom (document 0113)*

THIS BOOKLET

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This booklet was compiled by Barbara Mason (England) and Kees Slijkerman (The Netherlands) with contributions from young people who wrote the prayers: for chapter 1 Christine Baldacchino (Malta), 2 Toma Bružaitė (Lithuania), 3 Leen Van Herck and Ania Platteau (Belgium), 4 Anita Perjési (Hungary), 5 Rui Jorge Andrade Murteira (Portugal), 6 Bas Hoogeland (The Netherlands). Editorial oversight: Darek Jeziorny (Poland), Michelle Moran (England) and Pierre Chieux (France).