

European Elections which Europe do we want?

The elections of the members of the European Parliament will take place in Europe next May. The European Parliament is the only body of the European Union to be elected by direct universal suffrage since 1979. Voting is always a duty for the citizen.

For more than fifty years, the development of the European Union has been a factor of peace and prosperity for all the countries that have been the founders or have joined it, over the enlargements.

A statement by the Bishops of France (excerpts)

It seems important to us to invite Catholics, and beyond all citizens, to participate in the elections of members of the European Parliament and to express themselves, not first on national issues, but based on the projects carried out by the different lists which will be submitted to the suffrage of the electors. It is not a question of locking oneself in a manichaean scheme (for or against Europe) but to say which Europe we want, the economic, social, cultural and spiritual model that we think is most suitable for our continent today.

Europe is a continent marked by its history, painful and confrontational. No less than three Franco-German wars in less than a century, two world wars were triggered, the totalitarianisms of the twentieth century were born there. The Catholic Church has always been attentive to this consolidation of peace in the construction of Europe. We still see the fragility, especially after commemorating the centenary of the end of the first world war, remembering the millions of deaths that it has trained. If peace in Europe now seems to be acquired for the younger generations, let us remember that the war is also at our doorstep, yesterday in the Balkans, today in Ukraine.

This difficult and complex history has also made it possible to make progress in Europe towards a vision of man and society which has many common values and principles between our countries (human rights, respect for the person, solidarity and the search for a common good), many of which are derived from Christianity. "People and community, as Pope Francis said, are therefore the foundations of Europe that, as Christians, we want and can contribute to build. The stones of this building are called: dialogue, inclusion, solidarity, development and peace. (1)

We must help European citizens to discern the nature of the choices to be made to make Europe more responsive to their expectations but also to its own mission in the evolution of the world. Catholics from France and Europe, let us pray to the patron saints of our continent for its inhabitants and its elect (2).

(1) speech by Pope Francis at the Symposium "Rethinking Europe", Rome, 28/10/2017

(2) Saint Benoit of Nursie, Saints Cyril and Methodius, Saint Brigitte of Sweden, Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Teresa Benedict of the cross