



**Homily “Missa pro Europa”
(Jas 3,13-18; John 14,23-29)
✠ *Mariano Crociata***

**Church of Notre Dame au Sablon, Brussels
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What does it mean to pray for Europe? Surely, it does not mean to pass the responsibility to others, even when the “Other” is God himself. Like every earthly commitment, Europe is our business. So, what can we expect of God through prayer? Certainly not a ready-made answer to questions or an easy solution achieved by following a script. We pray to keep alive our relationship with God, who we recognise as the source of everything good we have received and are receiving in our life. Therefore, when we pray, we are looking for confidence, for courage, for a fuller understanding of what is good and for a strong will to pursue what is better for us and for all. A Christian believer, may he be a simple citizen or a person with a public role, has to rely on a heart renewed by faith and on the community of the Church. Both personal faith and Christian community are a work of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus says in today’s Gospel, «the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you». With this support, every Christian can face any challenge and take on any endeavour.

The biblical readings we have just listened to remind us of two important teachings of our Lord. Firstly, the unfailing presence of God in our life. Without this certainty, it is impossible to proceed and to fight the small and big battles we face in life. As Jesus says, «my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home with him». This is a promise in which every authentic faith is founded on. It requires constantly cultivating the relationship with God present in our midst, through praying and listening to the Word of God, reflecting on it and meditating.

Another invitation of today’s divine Word is to acquire true wisdom. According to Saint James, and to the whole Scripture, wisdom is not merely intellectual, it involves at the same time thinking and living. Jealousy and selfishness are both the cause and the effect of the lack of wisdom. On the contrary, «the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially something pure; it also makes for peace and is kindly and considerate; it is full of compassion and shows itself by doing good; nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it».

We are here to pray for Europe. After what has been said, we can add that prayer has the power to obtain for us two spiritual and moral fruits. Actually, the purpose of prayer is not to change the heart of God, but rather our own heart, as the heart of God is already so full of love and mercy for us that it could not be fuller. It is us who need to change, to become even more sensible to the inspirations from God and the expectations of our peoples for good, truth, justice and beauty.

There is another fruit of genuine prayer that is important to receive. It is the moral and intellectual ability to understand and judge situations under our responsibility and to take the consequent necessary measures. This is a kind of spiritual exercise, which the Church has been accomplishing for more than a century. Its result is the Church's social teaching. This requires the experience of believers involved in various fields of social life, as well as the reflection of those directly interested and those who address these issues from a theological point of view. It is our duty of bishops to accompany this work with our prayer, our teaching and the dialogue inspired by them.

We are aware that in this moment Europe needs peace and unity. Here we must focus again on the passage from the Gospel: «Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you». We have not ceased to appreciate and to cherish this peace of the Lord, and in this moment, it is our duty to contribute to building a just peace in Ukraine and in the Middle East. Nevertheless, unity is the first condition for peace, and sadly, it is also what the European Union lacks the most in this moment.

For these reasons, the prayer that in this Mass we address to God is that our hearts and the hearts of those responsible for taking decisions that affect many people are touched and changed by the Holy Spirit and the memorial of what Jesus has done for us.
Amen.