



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Homily

*St Peter's Basilica, Rome, 25 April 2026
Mons. Mariano Crociata*

Dear brothers and sisters,

The circumstance that brings us together today in St Peter's Basilica, you as Members of the European Parliament, deserves appreciation and encouragement—not only because of the opportunity of meeting Pope Leo XIV, but also because of the desire to reflect on our European mission as Christians in this particular moment of history.

All that we are experiencing today finds its centre and fulfilment in this Eucharistic celebration, which, by its very nature, gathers and transforms our whole life, uniting it with the sacrifice of Christ, with whom we enter into sacramental union through the Eucharist.

I would like to offer you two brief reflections to accompany this celebration, which takes place on the feast of Saint Mark the Evangelist.

The first reflection concerns the Gospel itself, of which Mark represents the earliest and most ancient testimony. The Gospels are our privileged gateway to know Jesus and to connect with his experience, his word, his person and his life.

The Church's social teaching has meaning and retains its authenticity only if, in its own proper field—that is, in relation to social realities—it faithfully expresses a substantial continuity with Jesus in ever new circumstances of time and place. This means that we cannot claim to develop interpretations or projects for social life while distancing ourselves from the very root that gives them meaning: the Gospel.

For this reason, it is essential for us as believers to return constantly to the reading and meditation of the Gospel, and to measure our social and political engagement against it.

The second reflection comes from today's Gospel, which presents the final passage of Mark, concerning the mission that Jesus entrusts to his disciples: "Go...". He promises to accompany their work of proclaiming the Gospel—which is far more than a book, since it contains the message and the very person of Jesus himself.

One message of this passage speaks clearly to us as well. There comes a time in the life of the disciples when Jesus is no longer present in a visible, earthly way. They must now walk, in a certain sense, on their own, knowing that he is with them in a new way—one that appeals above all to their conscience and responsibility, both individually and together.

Now it is up to them. And the Gospel also says to you today: now it is up to you. This is both an attractive and a demanding thought. It is beautiful to know that the Lord counts on us and expects us to play our part seriously: it means that he trusts us. At the same time, it is a challenge not to lose sight of the fact that he wishes to continue his mission through us.

Today, we are his mission—and in your case, in a particular way, in the social and political sphere.

We may ask ourselves: do we feel this responsibility? Do we truly perceive this trust?

Certainly, the Lord does not abandon us. He sustains our conscience and our will through his Word and through the Eucharist, and through all the means that the life of the Church offers us: for example, through the encounter with the Pope, but also through the many ways in which each of us experiences faith in our daily lives.

My wish, then, is that this day, and this sacramental celebration, may mark for you a moment of renewed commitment and fresh dedication.

Even in difficult times, the presence of the Lord never fails.