



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
AI PARLAMENTARI COMPONENTI L'ASSEMBLEA DELLA COMUNITÀ EUROPEA DEL
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Lunedì, 4 novembre 1957

It is a pleasure to receive you, gentlemen, and to greet you as the first and, at present, the only duly constituted European parliamentary institution representing different States.

Everyone knows with what interest We have followed the attempts at federation which have been going on since the end of World War II, and particularly the project which was to end in the setting up of this European Coal and Steel Community, armed with true legislative powers in its own domain. The movement was launched in the month of May, 1950, in a spirit that was both daring and realistic, and in 1951 a treaty signed by the six countries you represent gave it expression. This treaty became effective on July 25, 1952, and its first economic results were soon felt in a favorable way.

An event such as the meeting of your legislative assembly in Rome, will, We feel sure, create greater public interest in the benefits to be derived from a unity that is broader than that of a nation as understood in the traditional sense. Men will not fail to be struck by the increased production of coal and steel; by the lower prices resulting from the elimination of customs barriers and restrictive measures ; and by the professional readaptation of workers and the free circulation of manpower which, very fortunately, have recently been put into effect.

A vital economic necessity obliges modern states of lesser power to form a close alliance if they wish to pursue the scientific, industrial, and commercial activities which condition their prosperity, their true liberty, and their cultural growth. A whole set of reasons urges the nations of Europe today to federate in an effective way.

The material and moral ruins caused by the last World War have given a better insight into the

futility of narrow nationalistic politics. Europe, battered and humbled, feels the need of uniting and of putting an end to worldly rivalries ; she sees territories that were formerly protectorates reach the age of autonomy quickly; she notes that the market of basic goods has passed from a national to an international plane; finally, she senses, and so does the entire world with her, that all men are brothers and are called to work together in assuming responsibility for all the miseries of mankind and in putting an end to the scandal of famine and ignorance. How can the nations of Europe dare again to confine themselves to a shortsighted protectionism when experience has proven that such measures ultimately stifle economic expansion and diminish the resources that are available for the improvement of the lot of humanity?

It would be erroneous to believe that the new order will rise from the sheer pressure of economic factors. Human nature, weighed down by sin, breeds only disorder if left to its own desires. What is needed is a recognized law, and an authority able to enforce it.

One of the advantages of the European Coal and Steel Community is that it has proven its usefulness by tangible results. A greater stability of prices has made buyers and sellers acquire the habit of trading within the entire market, and the climate of confidence thus created gives hope that the treaty will soon be extended to include wider areas. At present, however, it can only guarantee a partial equilibrium, for a too-important part of economic trade still escapes it.

Another benefit of the ECSC which We would like to insist on is the social progress it stimulates in the interested states. It has done this by improving the living conditions of the workers, by assuring employment to workmen who as a result of more advanced technology had been discharged ; by maintaining the level of salaries ; by procuring for those concerned unemployment compensation, travel compensation, and compensation for technological training ; by supplying investments destined to create additional employment, or by constructing homes for the families of workingmen.

We would like to mention in particular the recent creation by the European Coal and Steel Community of the work-card which allows a first-class worker to circulate freely from one country to another. This result, although it may seem insignificant to the man in the street, is in reality the fruit of laborious negotiations necessitated by the diversity of the labor laws of the countries included in the Community; its symbolic value and practical importance, therefore, escapes no one. The equality of social conditions which it must progressively create across the new Europe among workers of the same category will certainly have profound human repercussions, and We express the hope that it will tend to bring minds and hearts closer in a real brotherhood.

Besides this benefit, which is primarily material, the work of the Community in the domain of social information also deserves attention. Indeed, the regular publication of firsthand reports on the condition of the market and production, the possibility given to labor unions to participate in inquiries on wages within the areas included by the Community, the financing of studies on the

security of work or, on specific sicknesses such as silicosis among miners, constitutes very notable services rendered to the workingman and an additional reason for Our good will.

Naturally, there is much work left to be done, and all the progress recently accomplished cannot be attributed to the ECSC ; but the initial steps taken in the spirit of the treaty by the organizations which the Community has inspired have led to valuable experiences and have occasioned changes which otherwise would have come more slowly. Even certain failures, for example in the transfer of manpower from less economically favored to more favored regions, have made unbiased appraisers aware of the necessity for a more daring economic policy, one more comprehensive and far-reaching in behalf of underdeveloped regions of Europe.

A moral lesson in energy and patience emerges from the present situation of the ECSC, for it could achieve the substantial results thus far attained only through a long juridical and technical preparation, without which it would never have overcome difficulties of all kinds which confronted it during the first months. Today many misgivings have been allayed which might have seemed insuperable, and one can begin to see, albeit imperfectly, that the movement under way can pause no longer, but must be wholeheartedly embraced and those temporary sacrifices accepted without which it cannot succeed.

It is, therefore, a joy for Us to think of the benefits, both spiritual and material, which can result from the pooling of the rich patrimony of Europe. In speaking of patrimony We deliberately use the word in a broad sense to include especially intellectual and moral values. It is surely necessary to base the attempt at political union on sure economic factors ; but we must count even more on the enrichment and stimulation which will result from fusion of old and deep-rooted cultures on the meeting of complementary temperaments and traditions, on the common development of the store of personal and social forces that has accumulated over long centuries of peaceful conquests – those conquests over the forces of nature which have improved, enriched, and embellished the land, and those victories over ignorance and error which have given birth to the culture, knowledge, and spiritual life of the Western world.

There is no thought of abolishing allegiance to one's fatherland or of fusing races arbitrarily. Love of the fatherland flows directly from the laws of nature, as summed up in the traditional text of the Commandments of God: «Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee» (Ex. 20, 12). Nevertheless, gratitude for the labors and accomplishments of our ancestors ordinarily begets an instinctive preference for certain ways of thinking and living and an attachment to privileges, which do not always have, or no longer have, any justification for existing in view of the new obligations created by the swift and profound evolution of the modern world. To enter into a larger community always entails sacrifices, but it is urgently necessary to understand their inescapable and ultimately beneficial character.

We note, incidentally, a happy change in public opinion in this regard, an opinion now better

informed, thanks to the facility of travel and the abundance of written and audio-visual documentation from which everyone can profit at little expense. This is a beginning, and to speed it on its way the contribution of a long Christian tradition will secure for you, with God's help, that degree of unselfishness without which there cannot be profound and durable union.

Just as the agreements now in force were the fruit of long efforts and of a supple and tenacious perseverance, so new hurdles cannot be cleared without expending great effort. The results thus far obtained augur well for the future, and We express the most sincere wishes for the work of your assembly.

The countries of Europe which have agreed to the principle of delegating a part of their sovereignty to a supranational organism have embarked, We believe, on a salutary way which can produce, for them and for Europe, a new life in all domains, an enrichment not only economic and cultural but also spiritual and religious.

And so We call down on your assembly light and strength from on high, and as a pledge of these We grant with all Our heart Our Apostolic Blessing to you, to all who are dear to you and whom you desire to recommend to Our prayers.

**The Pope Speaks*, vol.4, n°4 p.443-446.