



A Christian vision of today's Europe

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Document of the International Forum of Catholic Action (IFCA)

KRAKOW, Tuesday, May 18, 2010 (ZENIT.org) .-

Final document

Krakow, May 9, 2010

On May 9, Europe Day and the 60th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, in Krakow, on the liturgical feast of St. Stanislaus, patron of Poland, the work of the 5th Mediterranean European Continental Meeting of the IFCA was concluded. On May 6 with the Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz.

Together with the representatives of the Catholic Action of Poland at the national and diocesan level, representatives of Spain, France, Malta, Italy, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Israel along with Argentina and Burundi, member countries of the IFCA Secretariat.

The meeting in Poland, in Krakow-Lagiewniki, at the Pastoral Center of the Sanctuary of the Divine Mercy, gave everyone the opportunity to learn more about the Church and Catholic Action in this country, after the previous meetings had been held in Cirkewwa- Malta in 1996, in Iasi -Romania in 1998, Sarajevo in Bosnia Herzegovina in 2003 and Madrid in Spain in 2007, an itinerary that continues, with the desire to walk together in Europe, breathing with two lungs, as the spiritual vocation of our continent, from the Atlantic to the Urals, following the school of John Paul II.

The theme has been focused on four words that have been identified for all continental encounters, life, bread, peace, and freedom, among them in a close

relationship. The words were taken from the last message of John Paul II to the Diplomatic Corps, in January 2005, as the challenges to be welcomed in light of the theme of the 2005 World Day of Peace: "Overcoming evil with good". The IFCA proposes them as a grid to look at the reality of each continent with the eyes of faith, with humility and confidence, without prejudice and fear.

The contributions have deepened and highlighted some aspects: the responsibility of Europe in the world, the inalienable dimension - also political and legislative - of the defense of life, the priority of evangelization in a context that makes Europe even today a laboratory of the encounter between Christianity and cultures, the plural reality of the continent, the duty to grow in a European and global citizenship, the contribution of the AC.

Some fundamental fields have been identified to privilege and thus continue to build a fraternal, open, welcoming, solitary and peaceful continent:

Cultivate the educational passion, which is in the DNA of Catholic Action, which focuses on the person and the people, with a special reference to the family,

To assume dialogue as a human and spiritual attitude: ecumenical, interreligious dialogue and with cultures in the spirit of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, of Ecclesiam Suam,

Share the many forms of poverty - evident and not so evident, in solidarity, information and search for causes and solutions,

Deepen the knowledge and potential of the mass media, facing the subject of communication.

Promote the decision to be a member of CA as a significant option, in a context such as the current one where the attention of human relationships requires energies and times not only virtual.

These are areas that require a global acquisition of the Social Doctrine of the Church, the study and construction of the common good, at all levels, with men and women of goodwill.

The priority of a horizontal nature is indicated: the transmission of the Faith to the younger generations and their full participation in the life of the association, the Church and society.

We recommend an always deeper and more motivated awareness of the reciprocity that should characterize the European continent and that belongs to us as an expression of our catholicity: we are laic people who live in the local Churches in Europe and the universal Church, we commit ourselves to exchange gifts and experiences, especially between Europe and the Mediterranean, the

Middle East, Africa, reinforcing the link with the Holy Land.

Some concrete commitments have been adopted

- send a message of solidarity to the Episcopal Conference of Greece
 - promote greater attention and collaboration with the Council of the Episcopal Conferences of Europe (CCEE) and the Commission of Episcopal Conferences of the European Union (COMECE)
 - walk with the Churches of the Middle East to the October Synod
- "Europe is more than a continent, it is a house, and freedom finds its deepest meaning in being a spiritual homeland, fully respecting the distinction between the political and the religious sphere - a distinction that guarantees the freedom of citizens to express the religious creed itself and of living in harmony with it - I wish to emphasize the irreplaceable role of Christianity in the formation of the conscience of each generation and for the promotion of a fundamental ethical consensus, at the service of each person who calls this continent "home "

Benedict XVI Prague, September 26, 2009