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The vision of a united Europe and Poland's place and role in it in the light of St. John Paul II's teaching

Abstract

The entire history of Europe and the awareness of a common identity formed in its course are clearly and deeply marked by Christianity and indicate a close relationship between the Church and Europe. Both in the West and in the East, the Church desires to contribute to the European Union. It feels responsible for the shape of the Old Continent and is convinced that it can also make an important contribution to the establishment of new institutional forms.

In the age of pluralism and respect for all religious beliefs it is unacceptable that a tendency to discriminate against any religion should come to the fore. Since the European Union engages in dialogue with political parties, trade unions and representatives of various religions, it would be incomprehensible if the same attitude was not displayed towards Christianity.

Above all, one must not ignore the transcendent dimension possessed by each human being. Indifference to this dimension may lead to tragic consequences and the European continent has seen plenty of those painful examples throughout its history. From the beginning of his pontificate, John Paul II expressed a great interest in European affairs. He showed Europeans a vision of unity in diversity, creative fidelity to Christian origins, in freedom, truth and solidarity.

Keywords

Church, John Paul II, Europe, fatherland, nation, unity, community, Christianity, culture, tradition.

The idea of the integration of European continent has been recurring for a long time. When two people say ‘the same’ they do not necessarily mean ‘the same.’ On the one hand, when talking about European unity, postmodernists and liberals see Europe as a one federal state. On the other hand, conservatives and Catholics highlight the need to achieve European unity understood as ‘Europe of homelands,’ according to the European Union’s motto – *in varietate concordia* (‘united in diversity’). By this latter understanding of European unity, the majority of the continent’s residents express their will to live in one, great, spiritual commonwealth, provided that the valuable differences characterizing each and every nation and state are preserved.

This desire is supported by some national authorities, numerous bodies and organisations. On that note, the advocacy of the Catholic Church, that is its popes, hierarchy and the faithful, cannot be overlooked. Three successive popes: John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis, have been great supporters of European integration understood in this way.

1. The Christian origins of European culture

Almost from the very beginning of his pontificate, John Paul II reminded us that church people always participated in the process of shaping common European culture. The patron saints of Contemporary Europe – St. Benedict, Saints Cyril and Methodius, as well as St. Catherine of Siena, St. Bridget of Sweden and St. Edith Stein – are the best examples of such an attitude.¹ Their lives are characterized above all by their ability to harmoniously combine different cultures.

Certain actions towards unifying Europe were also undertaken in the past by the Holy Roman Emperor Otto III and Pope Sylvester II. Otto III wished to build a commonwealth of Christian nations which could revive the former glory of the Roman Empire.

Similar ideas of unification emerged in Europe multiple times in the second millennium A.D., however due to the unfavourable development of the international situation in many aspects, they were not implemented. The efforts towards unification were particularly intensified after the end of the Second World War. The idea of a unified Europe originated from the Christian inspiration of some

¹ Catholic circles in Poland endeavour to also have St. Adalbertus and St. John Paul II named as copatrons of the European continent.

politicians, such as Alcide De Gasperi, Robert Schuman, or Konrad Adenauer. Their efforts were supported by Popes Pius XII and Paul VI, and their ideas and endeavours were continued by Pope John Paul II.

He can be viewed as a great apostle and promoter of the idea of unity.² The vision of a unified Europe imbued with Christian spirit was particularly dear to him, as well as constituted an important part of his teaching.³ According to John Paul II, Europe cannot refer only to the past. It needs something different, that is, a new reflection on the future.⁴ According to these inspirations, on 30th March 2001, the Pope addressed the participants of the assembly of the Commission of Bishops of the European Community with the following words: '[...] What is being consolidated [EU states] must not only be a geographical and economic reality for the continent, but above all must strive for a cultural and spiritual union forged by the fruitful interaction of many important values and traditions. In the spirit of sharing, the Church continues to make her own specific contribution to this important process of integration.'⁵

In Gniezno, Pope John Paul II explicitly reminded us that only with Christ can we build a new home for Europe and that 'there will be no European unity until it is based on unity of the spirit. This most profound basis of unity was brought to Europe and consolidated down the centuries by Christianity with its Gospel, with its understanding of the human being and with its contribution to the development of the history of peoples and nations.'⁶

² H. Juros, *Proeuropejska wizja Jana Pawła II: miejsce Kościoła w zjednoczonej Europie*, in: *Ziarno czynu. Refleksje po V pielgrzymce Jana Pawła II do Ojczyzny*, Kraków 1998, pp. 165–168. [English translation: H. Juros, *Pro-European Vision of John Paul II: the Place of the Church in a Unified Europe*, translation by K.W.].

³ C. Ritter, "Etyka siłą Papieża", czyli *Jana Pawła II wizja zjednoczonej Europy*, "Ethos" (2002) nr 57–58, p. 135. [English translation: translation by K.W.].

⁴ T. Sławek, *Wieczność codzienna*, "Tygodnik Powszechny" (2004) nr 11, p. 1. [English translation: T. Sławek, *Daily Eternity*, translation by K.W.].

⁵ Jan Paweł II, *Europa wymaga na nowo pracy misyjnej* (30 III 2001), "L'Osservatore Romano" (wydanie polskie), 22 (2001) nr 5 (233), p. 29. [English translation: *Address of John Paul II to the Commission of Bishops of the European Union (COMECE), 30 March 2001*, available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2001/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20010330_comece.html] (3. 04.2021).

⁶ Jan Paweł II, *Tylko z Chrystusem można zbudować nowy dom dla Europy*, s. 27. [English translation: *1000 year Anniversary of the Death of St Adalbert*, Homily of John Paul II, Gniezno, 3 June 1997, available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1997/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19970603_gniezno.html] (31.03.2021).

2. The relationship between Europe and the Church – the history and the contemporaneity

The history of Europe is clearly and deeply marked by Christianity and proves a close relationship between the Church and Europe. The Church, both in the West and in the East, desires to make her contribution to the European Union. She feels responsible for the shape of the Old Continent and is convinced that she can also significantly contribute to the establishment of new institutional forms. European culture has its origins in Greco-Latin civilisation and its development has also been influenced by Judaism and Islam. The main mark, however, has been left by Christianity, which has been defining the specific character of Europe for two thousand years. Today one must not deny this heritage.

John Paul II says: '[...] It is a newness that speaks to society at every moment of history and in every place on earth, and in particular to European society, which for so many centuries has heard the Gospel of the Kingdom inaugurated by Jesus. [...] Christianity in fact has shaped Europe, impressing upon it certain basic values. Modern Europe itself, which has given the democratic ideal and human rights to the world, draws its values from its Christian heritage. Rather than only a geographical region, Europe can be described as 'a primarily cultural and historical concept', which denotes a reality born as a continent thanks also to the unifying force of Christianity, which has been capable of integrating peoples and cultures among themselves [...].'⁷

According to John Paul II the significant factors that gave the direction of the European axiology included: anthropology combined with self-reflection upon the human 'I', the thesis about the central value of a human person, confidence in the sense of history, belief in progress in every field, hope to build a world based on justice and solidarity, optimism in which evil does not constitute the highest and final instance, and realism which allows one to strive for ideals despite disappointment and failures.⁸

⁷ Jan Paweł II, *Posynodalna encyklika "Ecclesia in Europa"*, Watykan 2003, nr 108. [English translation: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, 2003, available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20030628_ecclesia-in-europa.html] (15.05.20210).

⁸ Cf. R. Zenderowski, *Czym jest Europa? Kim są Europejczycy?*, in: S. Sowiński, R. Zenderowicz, *Europa drogą Kościoła. Jan Paweł II o Europie i europejskości*. Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 2003, p. 15. [English translation: R. Zenderowski, *What is Europe? Who are Europeans?*, translation by K.W.].

The Catholic Church, for its part, is convinced that the Gospel of Christ, which has been a unifying factor for the peoples of Europe for many centuries, even today will remain an inexhaustible source of spirituality and fraternity for the European continent.⁹ In the teaching of John Paul II, Europe should become a 'community of spirit'. 'There will be no European unity until it is based on the unity of the spirit', said the Pope in Gniezno. 'This most profound basis of unity was brought to Europe and consolidated down the centuries by Christianity with its Gospel, with its understanding of the human being and with its contribution to the development of the history of peoples and nations.'¹⁰

The Catholic Church, through the teaching of John Paul II, as well as that of Benedict XVI, attempts to incessantly remind Europeans about their historical, cultural and moral identity, as being far more important than their geographical, economic or political identity. Christians should not only abdicate their responsibility for the common future, but they should also explicitly remind present-day citizens of the European Union about the common values shaped by Christianity. Following the thought of Pope Benedict XVI, we must admit that denying these values means a consent to 'apostasy' not only from God but also from the cultural identity of Europe.¹¹

A Swiss philosopher, personalist, and Jacques Maritain's student – Denis de Rougemont, also underlined the fact that the less Christian Europe is, the more its unity is threatened. In his opinion, Christianity is important to Europe for two reasons: it protects the real dignity of the individual and also, through its universalism, allows one to overcome all egoisms and particularisms. Christianity, as this author stresses in his *Open Letter to the Europeans*, confronts the

⁹ Jan Paweł II, *Rola instytucji europejskich*, "L'Osservatore Romano" (wydanie polskie), 24 (2003), nr 11–12 (258), p. 38. [English translation: John Paul II, *Angelus*, 24 August 2003, available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/angelus/2003/documents/hf_jp-ii_ang_20030824.html] (23.05.2021).

¹⁰ Jan Paweł II, *Gniezno, 3 czerwca. Homilia w czasie Mszy św. odprawionej na placu przed katedrą*, w: Jan Paweł II, *Pielgrzymki do Ojczyzny: 1979, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995, 1997, 1999. Przemówienia, homilie*, Kraków 1999, p. 911. [English translation: Homily of John Paul II, Gniezno, 3 June 1997, available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1997/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19970603_gniezno.html] (12.04.2021).

¹¹ Jan Paweł II, *Gniezno, 3 czerwca. Homilia w czasie Mszy św. odprawionej na placu przed katedrą*, w: Jan Paweł II, *Pielgrzymki do Ojczyzny: 1979, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995, 1997, 1999. Przemówienia, homilie*, Kraków 1999, p. 911. [English translation: Homily of John Paul II, Gniezno, 3 June 1997, available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1997/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19970603_gniezno.html] (12.04.2021).

morality of proportion and pragmatic reason inherited from Greco-Roman culture with the evangelical effusion of selfless love, the law of power with the service of charity, the cult of success with the spirit of sacrifice, and in this way creatively inspires European culture.¹²

The new situation is a huge challenge for the Church. The most urgent mission is to preach the Gospel message to the citizens of Europe. Drawing nearer Christ leads to closeness with other people despite the differences that separate us. New evangelisation, which was so frequently evoked in the teaching of John Paul II, is not – as the Special Assembly for Europe of the Synod of Bishops observes – a programme of ‘restauration’ of yore, but it should somehow lead all nations to a deepened rediscovery of their Christian origins and to building a new, more solidary civilisation. It is worth mentioning that the term ‘new’ refers to the invisible work of the Holy Spirit, who constantly makes everything new. It also defines that new civilisation which should emerge around the bend of history.

Christians contribute to European unification by promoting the civilisation of love, which manifests itself, among other things, in interpersonal solidarity with the more vulnerable. This solidarity stems from the Christian origins of Europe.¹³ Therefore, the shaping of social life based on evangelical values promoted by the Church leads to the true development of every man, every community, and to the stability of the democratic system. This is a challenge in which we participate. We want to face it together with all people of good will.

In the new European order, a crucial role should be played by the dialogue between religions, including Jews, for their faith and culture constitute a significant component of the development of European civilisation.¹⁴ The importance of Islam must not be overlooked, especially against a backdrop of the increasing

¹² Cf. D. de Rougemont, *List otwarty do Europejczyków*, przeł. A. Ołędzka-Frybesowa, Warszawa 1995, p. 42. [English translation: D. de Rougemont, *Open Letter to the Europeans*, 1970; translation by K.W.].

¹³ S. Dziwisz, *Obecny wkład chrześcijan w zjednoczenie Europy*, [English translation: S. Dziwisz, *The Present Contribution of Christians to European Integration*, op. cit., translation by K.W.].

¹⁴ *Deklaracja Końcowa Specjalnego Zgromadzenia Synodu Biskupów poświęconego Europie pt. “Abyśmy byli świadkami Chrystusa, który nas wyzwolił”, “L’Osservatore Romano”* (wydanie polskie), 13 (1992), nr 1 (139), p. 49. [English translation: The Final Statement of the First Special Assembly for Europe: *So that we might be witnesses of Christ who has set us free*, summary available at: http://www.synod.va/content/synod/en/synodal_assemblies/1991---special-assembly-for-europe--so-that-we-might-be-witnesse.html] (12.03.2021).

wave of immigration from Muslim countries with which Europe has close ties. In his address to the diplomatic corps on 13 January 1990, John Paul II observed that the stones from the demolished Berlin Wall should be used to build a new, common European home instead of erecting a new Tower of Babel.¹⁵

3. Europe of homelands

Half a century ago, the political leaders of the democratic part of contemporary Europe decided to build a European community based on economic, social, and political unification, by signing the Treaties of Rome. The Treaties of Rome, as well as subsequent legal acts, demonstrate not only a bold vision of the Founding Fathers but also their deep confidence in the necessity to build a common European home on the foundation of co-responsibility, solidarity, and mutual respect.¹⁶

Over half a century ago, not only was Europe bleeding from the painful wounds of the Second World War but it was also a continent divided by the Iron Curtain, a continent constantly being on the brink of conflict. That was when Konrad Adenauer, Alcide De Gasperi, and Robert Schuman, outstanding European politicians and great Christians, drew the inspiration for their actions from the Christian principles of subsidiarity, solidarity, and responsibility, and boldly sketched out a vision of a body/an institution in which equal rights would be enjoyed by both large and small countries, rich and poor ones, those who won the war and those who were defeated.¹⁷

¹⁵ Cf. J. Życiński, *Korzenie nowej jedności*, in: *Polska i Kościół w procesie integracji europejskiej*, (ed. J. Piasecka), Warszawa 1998, p. 5 nn. [English translation: Compare J. Życiński, *The roots of new unity*, translation by K.W.].

¹⁶ S. Dziwisz, *Słowo podczas konferencji "Od Traktatów Rzymskich do Traktatu Europejskiego"*, *Przegorzały*, 14. 09. 2007, <http://archiwalna.diecezja.pl/biskupi/kard-stanislaw-dziwisz/wystapienia/konferencja-od-traktatow-rzymskich-do-traktatu-europejskiego-przegorzaly-14-ix-2007.html> (8.01.2019). [English translation: S. Dziwisz, *Speech at the Conference 'From the Treaties of Rome to the Constitutional Treaty'*, *Przegorzały* 14 September 2007].

¹⁷ S. Dziwisz, *Słowo podczas konferencji "Od Traktatów Rzymskich do Traktatu Europejskiego"*, *Przegorzały*, 14. 09. 2007, <http://archiwalna.diecezja.pl/biskupi/kard-stanislaw-dziwisz/wystapienia/konferencja-od-traktatow-rzymskich-do-traktatu-europejskiego-przegorzaly-14-ix-2007.html> (8.01.2019). [English translation: S. Dziwisz, *Speech at the Conference 'From the Treaties of Rome to the Constitutional Treaty'*, *Przegorzały* 14 September 2007].

The project of the Constitutional Treaty in its economic dimension is based on the interest and economic benefits that the treaty provides to the signing parties. By contrast, a political project accompanying the treaty from the very beginning cannot prescind from ethical values. It is precisely this broadly understood process of European integration to which religious communities, with the Catholic Church at the forefront, make their contribution. Despite the fact that they are not directly appointed to address the issue of European unification, it can now be said with all responsibility, that they perform a prophetic role.¹⁸

This dimension of the Church's involvement in the life of contemporary, still unifying Europe, was highlighted by Pope Benedict XVI: '[...] the European Union, in order to be [...] an efficient promoter of universal values, cannot but recognize clearly the certain existence of a stable and permanent human nature, source of common rights for all individuals, including those who deny them.'¹⁹ In his address to the participants of the convention 'The Values and Perspectives for the Europe of Tomorrow', the Pope mentioned the progress of political and economic integration of Europe, stressing the fact that our European continent will lose confidence in its future.²⁰ The Pope observed that this results from the attempt to build an authentic European 'common home' without considering the identity of its constituent peoples.²¹

¹⁸ S. Dziwisz, *Słowo podczas konferencji "Od Traktatów Rzymskich do Traktatu Europejskiego"*, Przegorzały, 14. 09. 2007, <http://archiwalna.diecezja.pl/biskupi/kard-stanislaw-dziwisz/wystapienia/konferencja-od-traktatow-rzymskich-do-traktatu-europejskiego-przegorzaly-14-ix-2007.html> (8.01.2019). [English translation: S. Dziwisz, *Speech at the Conference 'From the Treaties of Rome to the Constitutional Treaty'*, Przegorzały 14 September 2007].

¹⁹ Benedykt XVI, *Wartości uniwersalne ukształtowane przez chrześcijaństwo są duszą Europy*, "L'Osservatore Romano" (wydanie polskie), 28 (2007), nr 6 (294), p. 34. [English translation: *Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Participants in the Convention Organized by the Commission Of The Bishops' Conferences of The European Community (COMECE)*, 24 March 2007, available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2007/march/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070324_comece.html] (14.03.2021).

²⁰ Benedykt XVI, *Wartości uniwersalne ukształtowane przez chrześcijaństwo są duszą Europy*, "L'Osservatore Romano" (wydanie polskie), 28 (2007), nr 6 (294), p. 34. [English translation: *Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Participants in the Convention Organized by the Commission Of The Bishops' Conferences of The European Community (COMECE)*, 24 March 2007, available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2007/march/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070324_comece.html] (14.03.2021).

²¹ Benedykt XVI, *Wartości uniwersalne ukształtowane przez chrześcijaństwo są duszą Europy*, "L'Osservatore Romano" (wydanie polskie), 28 (2007), nr 6 (294), p. 34. [English translation: *Address Of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Participants in the Convention Organized by the Commission Of The Bishops' Conferences of The European Community (COMECE)*, 24 March

An optimistic present and future of our continent also depend on the discovery and confirmation of our own identity. Memory is the strength that creates the identity of human beings, both individuals and communities. Therefore, a proper, that is genuine historical policy is so important in the life of societies and nations. Identity is determined not only by the memory of one's past, but also by lasting and timeless points of reference.

The vision of Europe as a community of homelands is therefore essential. It is the path that should be followed by the European Union which aims at the economic community of the Member States connected with each other by common tradition and culture while their political independence is preserved.²² Such a vision of Europe must be based on the respect for the Member States' sovereignty and the development of intergovernmental, rather than supranational cooperation.²³ The authorship of this vision is attributed to Charles de Gaulle and its main thesis is that the European Union should only be a form of collaboration among independent states which unify to jointly address selected issues. Next to the crucial spiritual sphere, there is also a commonality of interests which results from given geopolitics and common and mutual relationships. All these areas are tied together in international cooperation, which is obviously based on the subjectivity of states, where nation/national states are the subject or agent of action, not the EU bureaucracy.

The development cooperation of the EU Member States, mainly in its economic dimension, has three characteristics: coordination, consistency, and complementarity. On the one hand, the European Commission facilitates coordinated development, however, there is a potential danger of illegal but actual usurpation and broadening of the extent of its own competences at the expense of individual member states. On the other hand, the consistency policy (single market, single currency, unified law, standardisation of rules and norms) guarantees equal opportunities on the Euromarket while at the same time it may, and often does, destroy historical, cultural, legal, political, economic or religious

2007, available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2007/march/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070324_comece.html] (14.03.2021).

²² W.M. Góralski, *Integracja europejska. Pojęcie, istota, doktryna*, in: *Unia Europejska. T. II: Gospodarka – Polityka – Współpraca*, Warszawa 2007, p. 23. [English translation: W.M. Góralski, *European Integration: Concept, Essence, Doctrine*, translation by K.W.].

²³ W.M. Góralski, *Integracja europejska. Pojęcie, istota, doktryna*, in: *Unia Europejska. T. II: Gospodarka – Polityka – Współpraca*, Warszawa 2007, p. 23. [English translation: W.M. Góralski, *European Integration: Concept, Essence, Doctrine*, translation by K.W.].

individuality of national communities, not to mention the marginalisation or even extinction of various regional cultures, which constitute the wealth of our civilisation.

Finally, the complementarity of activities is almost solely based on the top-down distribution of the joint EU means and human resources by the EU authorities, without pooling the capacities and complementing the creative potential of the various Member States of the Community. As to the coordination policy and external relations, the EU does not always allow for the opinions of its partners, nor does it always reckon with them in practice (nothing about us without us). Similarly, the principle of consistency usually means dictating and enforcing behaviours and reactions completely strange to our civilisation. In the end, complementarity, instead of integrating, vassalizes societies and nations, resulting even in the marginalisation of entire social groups and weaker states.²⁴

Processes which are even more complex than those in the economic sphere, may be observed in the political and cultural functioning of the European Union. On the one hand, unification or limitation of rich diversity leads to the stagnation or regression of civilisation. On the other hand, the collective egoisms of various states should be compensated and overcome by the ethical attitude of solidarity and love, and by the globalisation of solidarity. This solidarity, both in the individual Member States and in the entire European Union, should mean: the assurance of moral order and a sense of security; equal access to cultural values, education and upbringing; and finally, securing a sustainable organisation of social policy that guarantees other state communities similar rentability of their undertakings.²⁵

The Member States remain separate entities in international relations and they retain their competences. Therefore, decisions made by the EU authorities should meet the interests of these states and not only of the organisation which brings them together. The responsibility of the European Council and the Council of the European Union [‘the Council’] is to represent the positions of individual countries, which – together with the European Commission – are

²⁴ Cf. B. Lestienne, *Zmiana relacji Unia Europejska a Kraje Południa*, in: *Chrześcijaństwo a integracja europejska*, (oprac. J. Sweeney, J. Van Gerwen), Kraków 1997, p. 222 nn. [English translation: Compare B. Lestienne, *A Change in the Relationships between the European Union and the Southern Countries*].

²⁵ Cf. J. Krucina, *Dobro wspólne. Teoria i jej zastosowanie*, Wrocław 1972, p. 295 nn. [English translation: Compare J. Krucina, *The Common Good: Theory and Its Application*].

the most important EU organs. The European Council defines the main directions of the EU development whereas the Council issues (alone or in cooperation with the European Parliament) the majority of legal acts.²⁶

The Europe of nation states does not preclude nor restrain mutual and good collaboration, on the contrary, it may stimulate it. This is a loose confederation, not a strict federation. This collaboration should be based on the equal treatment of all cooperating states so there must be no first- or second-rate states. Unequal treatment of the states would be unfair and dangerous for the future. We must therefore be alarmed by the fact that at this moment, in the European Union, there are major and minor states, states of so-called 'first or second speed'. Furthermore, the number of areas that are being excluded from the jurisdiction of the Member States is constantly increasing. In the European Union, there should be an equilibrium between the states, which means caring for the smaller and economically weaker Member States so that they are not dominated by stronger countries, such as Germany or France.

The Church advocates for a united Europe but one understood as 'Europe of homelands', not as a federation of individual states. Therefore, she reminds us that although the concepts of nation and homeland fully emerged no sooner than in the 19th century, they are of great value for social life. The Church strives for preserving these concepts and appeals for shaping the social life based on them. She also defends the national, cultural, and ethnic identity of individual states. She particularly desires to appreciate the familiar regional or local traditions and customs, which used to exist within so-called 'little homelands' and were then pushed (sometimes brutally) out of circulation either due to deliberate policy (a destructive role of communist ideology in Eastern Europe) or by the spread of mass culture models (the process of so-called 'Americanisation' of life inevitably accompanying the process of globalisation). In other words, the Church wishes to co-create a Europe of homelands, nations, and families, and not a Europe of egoists, entitled aspirations and ruthless market.

John Paul II was an undeniable proponent of the Europe of homelands, not of a federal European state, as he himself highlighted on various occasions. There is a deeper reason for such a stance: for the Europe of homelands, one chooses a path of qualitative development, for the European federation – a path

²⁶ A. Wawdejuk, *Europa Ojczyzn a Europa regionów*, <http://www.twojaeuropa.pl/466/teorie-integracji-cz-i-europa-ojczyzn-a-europa-regionow> (9.01.2019). [English translation: A. Wawdejuk, *Europe of Homelands vs Europe of Regions*, translation by K.W.].

of procedural one. A procedural attitude towards reality entails not only a policy of silence but also political correctness, bureaucratisation of life and a crisis of values. John Paul II warned that democracy without values sooner or later would degenerate into open or hidden totalitarianism.²⁷

The process of European integration should be viewed from a personal perspective, not a reistic approach. This means that united Europe should secure the personal development of people instead of subordinating the people to an unspecified development of Europe. On this account, Europe needs such values as: personal dignity, sanctity of human life, the family based on marriage being placed in a central position, the importance of education, freedom of thought and religion, protection of the rights of individuals and social groups, work viewed as social and personal good, and the exercising of political power understood as service.²⁸

In our secularised world, Christians, including Poles, must give a clear testimony of their faith, especially before Europe. This testimony, as John Paul II wrote in his apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, is particularly needed in the face of anti-evangelisation, that is where a limited anthropology – without God or Christ – is imposed on people.²⁹

Card. Stanisław Dziwisz observed that John Paul II believed that Poland would have a dual role in the united Europe. Firstly, it is to be *antemurale christianitatis* – the ‘bulwark of Christendom.’ Christians must not only withstand evil but also engage in combat for man against man himself for he often does not notice that he has become his own enemy.³⁰

²⁷ S. Dziwisz, *Jan Paweł II patronem Europy?* <http://archiwalna.diecezja.pl/biskupi/kard-stanislaw-dziwisz/wystapienia/swiety-jan-pawelii-patronem-europy.html> (7.01.2019). [English translation: S. Dziwisz, *John Paul II – a patron saint of Europe?*, translation by K.W.].

²⁸ S. Dziwisz, *Jan Paweł II patronem Europy?* <http://archiwalna.diecezja.pl/biskupi/kard-stanislaw-dziwisz/wystapienia/swiety-jan-pawelii-patronem-europy.html> (7.01.2019). [English translation: S. Dziwisz, *John Paul II – a patron saint of Europe?*, translation by K.W.].

²⁹ EiE 9. [English translation: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia In Europa* of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, 2003, available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20030628_ecclesia-in-europa.html] (14.04.2021).

³⁰ S. Dziwisz, *Jan Paweł II patronem Europy?* <http://archiwalna.diecezja.pl/biskupi/kard-stanislaw-dziwisz/wystapienia/swiety-jan-pawelii-patronem-europy.html> (7.01.2019). [English translation: S. Dziwisz, *John Paul II – a Patron Saint of Europe?*, translation by K.W.].

Poland's second task in the European Union is to become 'a bridge for humanity' – *pons humanitatis* – in order to propagate authentic values, promote noble mores, raise cultural standards, and fulfil evangelical love of its neighbours.³¹

In his speech in Włocławek on 7 June 1991, John Paul II reminded his audience that the mission of blessed Fa. Jerzy Popiełuszko was not a political one, but an ethical one. In Europe who is wrestling with multiple crises, the Church in Poland has another great role to play – to protect and promote ethical values.³²

4. Conclusion

The entire history of Europe and the awareness of a common identity formed in its course are clearly and deeply marked by Christianity and indicate a close relation between the Church and Europe. Both in the West and in the East, the Church desires to contribute to the European Union. She feels responsible for the shape of the Old Continent and is convinced that she also can make an important contribution to the establishment of new institutional forms.

European culture has its origins in Greco-Latin civilisation and its development has also been influenced by Judaism and Islam. The main mark, however, has been left by Christianity, which has been defining the specific character of Europe for two thousand years. Today this heritage must not be denied.

In the age of pluralism and respect for all religious beliefs, it is unacceptable that a tendency to discriminate against any religion should come to the fore. Since the European Union engages in dialogue with political parties, trade unions and religious representatives, it would be incomprehensible if a similar attitude was not adopted towards Christianity.

Above all, the transcendent dimension possessed by each human being must not be denied. Indifference to this dimension may lead to tragic consequences and the European continent has seen plenty of those painful examples throughout its history. From the beginning of his pontificate, John Paul II expressed

³¹ G. Górny, *Jan Paweł II: Europa potrzebuje Polski*, "Przewodnik Katolicki", nr 25 (2003), p. 7–8. [English translation: G. Górny, *John Paul II: Europe Needs Poland*, translation by K.W.].

³² Jan Paweł II, *Jaka wolność? Jaka Europa?*, "L'Osservatore Romano" (wydanie polskie), 12 (1991), nr 6 (133), p. 7. [English translation: John Paul II, *What Freedom? What Europe?*, translation by K.W.].

a great interest in European affairs. He was showing Europeans a vision of unity in diversity, creative fidelity to Christian origins, in freedom, truth, and solidarity.

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