

Letter to the Dominican Family in view of the European elections, May 2019

At a recent meeting of European Friars Promoters of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, we discussed together the importance of the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament, as did other Justice and Peace Commissions of Europe. We decided to share our concern with all the JPIC Promoters of our region. For this, we have written a text that has been sent to all Promoters to collect opinions. The final result is this letter that brings together the challenges outlined for most of us.

Circumstances remind us of our Order's responsibility to read the signs of times in order to give our contribution to the common good. We wish to suggest some fundamental topics that may serve as a starting point for reflection in our communities and apostolate. We will list them briefly, following this methodology: to see, to judge, to act, suggesting, in the end, a reference to some witnesses in the Dominican Family.

Migration, xenophobia and racism

Migration is a complex epochal phenomenon. It invites us first of all to become aware of its causes: injustice, violence, and economic exploitation in countries of origin. Voluntary, safe, regular and well-managed migration contributes to development and cultural enrichment.

Migration is a call to accept the Gospel message of hospitality, of responsibility towards the most vulnerable and of openness to encounter.

To be faithful to the Gospel requires a change of mentality and lifestyle as well as the rejection of xenophobia, hostility and those forms of racism that see migrants as scapegoats for the problems of our European societies.

We suggest to let ourselves be inspired by the witness of Dominique Pire.

Social and economic inequalities and fair distribution of goods

Even in our European societies, we see increasing social and economic inequality and exclusion. The dominance of neoliberal financial capitalism based on the idolatry of money (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium* 55) promotes a throwaway culture and creates precarious living conditions and lack of decent work. Women are victims of exploitation, discrimination and violence.

This situation invites us to welcome the preaching of the prophets contained in the Church's social teaching on just relations and decent work for every person.

We are therefore invited to show solidarity with those who suffer, to propose alternative economic and labour models that protect social rights and to promote laws that recognise these rights.

We suggest to let ourselves be inspired by the witness of Giorgio La Pira.

Family policies and protection of life

We see that family policies are generally inadequate when it comes to promote higher birth rates, children's education, care of the sick and the elderly, and supporting the reconciliation of work and family life.

This situation reminds us of Jesus, who saw every person not as an object, but as a subject, and was able to welcome the others and offered his own life for our salvation.

It invites us to develop policies that promote care, the gift of oneself, solidarity and promotion of life in all its phases.

We suggest we let ourselves be inspired by the witnesses of many Dominican sisters across the world committed to the care of the weakest.

The crisis of democracy and populisms

We see a general crisis of constitutional democracy. Populisms promote forms of exclusionary nationalism and sometimes manipulate the Christian faith or the Human Rights while proposing simplistic solutions to complex problems.

This situation urges us to put Jesus' call to universal brotherhood into practice.

It also invites us to address conflicts in truth, to seek ways of reconciliation, to live mercy, and to discover our identity not in opposition to the other.

We suggest we let ourselves be inspired by the witness of Blessed Pierre Claverie.

Ecological crisis

We are aware that we are experiencing an ecological crisis which threatens the future of our planet and future generations. Environmental pollution, climate change and the excessive exploitation of natural resources have a profound impact on the health of populations and the integrity of Creation.

This situation invites us to welcome the Bible's message on Creation and to gain better knowledge of the calls to action contained in the encyclical *Laudato si'*, particularly the call to ecological conversion and the protection of our common home.

It invites us to rethink our consumption patterns and take concrete action to achieve the goals outlined in the UN 2030 Agenda (17 Sustainable Development Goals).

We suggest to let ourselves be inspired by the witness of the Dominican Family Delegation to the UN in Geneva and New York and also that of our brothers and sisters in the Amazon region and other places in the world.

Our reflection should develop these points for the renewal of "a Europe capable of giving birth to a new humanism based on three capacities: the capacity to integrate, the capacity for dialogue and the capacity to generate". (Pope Francis, *Speech at the Conferral of the Charlemagne Prize*, 6 May 2016).

Br. Xabier Gómez op, Regional Promoter of JPIC-Europe

Br. Alessandro Cortesi op, Promoter of JPIC, Province of St. Catherine of Siena (Italy)

Br. Ivan Attard op, Promoter of JPIC, Province of Malta

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