Dear brothers and sisters of the Dominican Family in Europe,

During my recent meetings with you, you have sometimes expressed your concern for the current development within the European society. In the places where Christ sends you to preach, in the stories entrusted to you by those you meet, through the news you receive in the media, you are witnesses to situations that appear to you to be contrary to the message of the Gospel and the social doctrine of the Church. This context worries and questions you. The colloquium on the Order's preaching, which took place in Cologne last October, was entitled Holy Preaching: Our Challenge in a Fragile Europe. Our dear brothers in Ukraine are living today in a context of serious conflict. All this leads you to worry about peace and justice on the European continent.

Our Dominican tradition is rich in personalities who in various ways have carried the evangelical message of peace and justice in their apostolate. It suffices to mention here the names of Bartolomé de las Casas, Jean-Joseph Lataste, Giorgio La Pira, Vincent McNabb, Louis-Joseph Lebret, Laure Sabès, Patrik Kužela, Aurelius Arkenau, Mikuláš Lexmann, Dominique Pire, Michał Czartoryski, Hijacint Bošković, Anna Abrikosova and many others. During her short life, Catherine of Siena also tried to bring a message of peace, both within the Church and in society. It is therefore no surprise that she was chosen as one of the co-patrons of Europe, a continent whose history is marked by so many tears and conflicts between peoples.

In response to these concerns and to the Order's commitment to justice and peace, and at this time in history when Europe appears to suffer divisions, Dominican brothers and sisters have taken two initiatives that I want to support by this letter. On the one hand, European promoters of Justice and Peace have published a text to raise our awareness to the challenges for society in Europe. On the other hand, a group of brothers and sisters prepared a prayer for Europe, entrusting the inhabitants of our continent to God through the intercession of Saint Catherine of Siena. You will find these two documents attached to this message as well as on www.op.org. I invite you to spread them, if needed by translating them into your local
language, and to use them as widely as possible, among the communities of the Dominican family, among all those who attend our churches, chaplaincies, schools and among those you encounter in your activities. I also invite you to publish them on your respective websites. I especially call you to pray this Prayer for Europe on or around the feast of Saint Catherine of Siena on 29 April.

Allow me to repeat here the heart’s call which our brother Ludwik Wisniewski made during his tribute to Pawel Adamowicz, mayor of Gdansk, murdered on January 14th 2019: We must stop with hate speech, contempt, unfounded accusations. We will no longer be indifferent to the poison of hatred that is rampant in the streets, in the media, on the internet, in schools, in Parliament, but also in the churches. Those who speak the language of hatred and make a career out of lies cannot exercise high responsibilities. These words call each of us to conversion and to responsibility so that individually and as a Dominican family, we may be worthy messengers of the Prince of Peace.

In union of prayer, I wish you a joyful journey towards Easter,
Your brother in Saint Dominic,

Bruno Cadoré OP
Master of the Order of Preachers
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 Promotors 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

Madrid, 1 February 2019

Through the intercession of Saint Catherine of Siena and of our continent’s other patron saints, we lift up our prayer to the Lord our God.

O Father, the fount of justice, strengthen our will to build justice for all those whose paths we cross, in particular the poorest among the poor.

**FOR THIS WE PRAY. LORD, HEAR US.**

O Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, give us all peace of heart, and help us to work for peace in Europe and in the world today.

**FOR THIS WE PRAY. LORD, HEAR US.**

O Father who sent the Holy Spirit, may your divine wisdom be with those who have political, economic and cultural responsibilities in Europe. Bless all those implicated in international institutions. May they be channels of peace and of justice in the service of your Kingdom.

**FOR THIS WE PRAY. LORD, HEAR US.**

O Father of the Son who asks us to be one, as He was one with you, help us to build unity and concord in our families, our communities, our workplaces, our cities, our countries and all over the world.

**FOR THIS WE PRAY. LORD, HEAR US.**

O Father, the Face of mercy and good will, render us capable, in a spirit of mutual respect, to discover the richness of diversity through imitating your love.

**FOR THIS WE PRAY. LORD, HEAR US.**

O Father, the fount of all love, infuse in us the courage to imitate in our daily tasks your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself to the cross for our sake, that a culture of love might grow in our society.

**FOR THIS WE PRAY. LORD, HEAR US.**

From turning in on ourselves, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From fear of the diverse and the unknown, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From the spirit of division, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From lies and falsehood, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From disinterest in the common good, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From indifference, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From refusing dialogue, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From disdain for life, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From the lack of respect for Creation, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From the lack of hope, **deliver us, O Lord.**

*With Saint Catherine of Siena, let us pray:*

**O Holy Spirit, come into my heart, by your power, O God, draw me to you and give me charity with right fear. Protect me, Christ, from every evil thought, warm me, enflame me with your most sweet love, so that every burden will seem light to me. My Holy Father and my sweet Lord, now help me with your acts of service. Christ love! Amen.**

*"O Holy Trinity, in the light of faith, I gain wisdom in the wisdom of the Word, your Son; in the light of faith, I am strong, constant and persevering; in the light of faith, I have hope. It does not let me faint along the way. This light shows you to me and in this light I know you, highest and infinite God; Good above every good, joyous Good, Good beyond measure and understanding! Beauty above all beauty; Wisdom above all wisdom — indeed you are wisdom itself! You who are the angels God, are given to humans with burning love. You, garment who cover all nakedness, pasture the starving with your sweetness, for you are sweet without bitterness... Clothe me, clothe me with yourself, eternal Truth, so I may run the course of this mortal life in true obedience and in the light of most holy faith. With that light, I sense my soul once again becoming drunk."*  

*Saint Catherine of Siena, Dialogue, 167*
Saint Catherine of Siena
Co-Patron Saint of Europe
1347-1380

Without a doubt, Saint Catherine came to work out a European vision of her mission, and we can say that she assimilated a European mentality in every detail in her small town of Siena. For us living in the twenty-first century, on whom the mentalities of exacerbated nationalism and of frontiers-become-barriers have been imprinted, it is hard to imagine a Europe where each person considered his or her neighbour a companion, a part of the same world in which one could pass freely from one country into another.

Her letters reveal a truly European action from which lessons can be drawn for civil government or for principles of a political doctrine. They contain a flavour of modernity that every sincerely democratic European could accept. Authority is but a temporary loan, and unique to the customs and mores of each country.

For Saint Catherine, political government is a service to be rendered to a given community in brotherly love, in order to regulate one’s own disorderly passions such as egoism, vanity, greed, fear. It is a profoundly Christian doctrine, one that a mystic might dictate, but one that is also profoundly human and democratic, an anticipation of the ideal political person. Today’s Europe would recognize herself in this ensemble of constitutional principles destined to reconcile the governors with their subjects and the subjects with their governors, and to bring about the triumph of justice, the common good and peace.

MARIO CASTELLANO OP
S. Caterina de’ Sieno (Europe
Gaedein, Germany: 30 pp. 13-14)

PRAYER FOR EUROPE

“Se sarete quello che dovete essere, metterete il fuoco dell’amore in tutto il mondo.”

“If you are what you ought to be, you will set the world alight with the fire of love.”

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA
LETTER XVII

This prayer is an initiative of Dominican brothers and sisters.
2019. Dominican General Coord.,
Piazza Pietro d’Illia 1, 00153
Rome. www.op.org

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Paulowitz, OP. The six patron saints of Europe: St. Benedict, St. Bonaventure, St. Methodius and Cyril, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Bridget of Sweden.

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