

Column on time

Europe

On June 4th we can issue our vote for the European parliament. All citizens of the European Union which are entitled to vote can participate in this election. And whether you are Euro-sceptic or Euro-believer, whether you think more influence has to go to "Brussels" or should remain in "The Hague", it is important to exercise this democratic right as responsible citizen.

The roots of the European Union lay in the Second World War. Again Europe was torn up by a war which this time deeply affected the whole continent (and many countries outside of it) and this in spite of the fact that the countries of Europe have so much in common. After the fall of the wall the separation that went right across Europe was lifted and the Union got a steady enlargement eastwards.

This new alliance can only be meaningful based on a shared history and a shared identity. A unique history took place in Europe. The influences of Hellas (the Greek way of thinking), of Rome (the Roman Empire) and of Christianity have come together here in a miraculous way and led to a unique development.

To me Christ is the greatest gift to Europe. 'God became man' - this caused a revolution in the heart, the mind and the society. It involves a reverence for human nature that should be unyielding. This reverence translates into righteousness and compassion. It translates into a protest against the attempt to measure people's worth by capital or power.

The latest gets new topicality now. The human proportion will have to get explicitly back on the agenda again against the unrestrained liberalism and against the belief in the market.

Christ and His love translate also into a passion for freedom of totalitarian powers. Remember the line in our national hymn: '... may drive out the tyranny which pierces my heart'.

But it also gives freedom to serve. Freedom of, which is not a freedom for, soon becomes freedom against the other, the weaker, the stranger and the migrant. These values are very necessary in today's world. As far as Europe upholds these values, Europe's role is not finished yet.

In the secular Europe churches have a much more marginal position than before. This can also be a purification that helps to be a true and authentic witness. That is of vital importance for the identity of the Europe of tomorrow. I vote for such a Europe.

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