

Message to the Men and Women Religious of Europe
General Assembly UCESM
TORHOUT, Belgium, 11-17 February 2008

This is the contribution that we, as religious and citizens, wish to offer to Europe's human and spiritual growth.



Europe, being a complex reality, is composed of many cultural and ethnic identities as well as having many languages, it is sustained by different religions and beliefs.

Europe is a place of both diversity and unity.

Europe is the promised land so often denied to the poor who are knocking at its doors, asking for a space of hope and justice.

We, men and women religious, who in the course of history have stimulated the birth of its cultural, human, and christian identity, wish to offer our contribution in order that Europe may never lose these profound roots. Religious vow to nourish the soul of Europe.

We, men and women religious, consider ourselves as sons and daughters of this Europe with its painful history, living the same tensions, contradictions, and weaknesses, but also as bearers of the message of the gospel.

We believe that community, as a gift of the Spirit, asserts **Gods primacy**, because it is the place of meeting Christ, who has chosen us, has brought us together, and gives us the grace of acknowledging his love by living in authentic, joyful brotherhood, open for all to understand.

We believe that community is a **true school** that leads to a process of conversion from the 'I' to the 'we', awakening our passion for meeting one another and seeking true happiness.

We believe that community is a **school of relating**, in which bonds with one another are woven with patience, placing in common the resources, the difficulties, and the fragilities of each. The strength of this bond builds community, and unity is created where differences are integrated.

We believe that community is a **school of reconciliation and forgiveness**. The quest for truth lets suffering and limits come into the open, recognises evil within us as well as outside of us, denounces it, and moves towards peace.

We believe that community is a **school of hospitality**, teaching us to make space for God and for the others, to listen to the cry of the outcast, the humbled, the immigrants. Moved by our passion for humanity, we do all we can to honour personal dignity.

We believe that an evangelised community is called to **mission**. This has to be accomplished in a new way: with a humble presence, with a growing cooperation between the various institutes and lay people, with a new language of mercy and hope.