

Ratzinger sees Europe's future based on concept of 'continuing creation'

A remarkable sermon, with implications in the current political debate that go far beyond the Roman Catholic faithful, was delivered on June 3 by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, the Vatican's Prefect for the Congregation of the Faith. The German cardinal was celebrating the solemnity of Pentecost in the historic German city of Speyer, now commemorating its 2,000th anniversary.

Ratzinger, who is known to be extremely close to Pope John Paul II, took the occasion to reiterate and enrich the concept of the unique role assigned to the human race and the human individual in the Judeo-Christian tradition, of participating in a crucial manner in the ongoing work of God's creation through cooperating in the divine plan.

This is not an esoteric theological issue. Indeed, Britain's Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, has recently escalated his campaign to displace the "revealed religions" (which include Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) with a fervid revival of nature cults in which animals, plants, insects, and other creatures are given not merely equal status, but indeed priority over man, based on a vision of entropy and limits to growth.

Prince Philip, whose (unearned) personal wealth as the consort of the world's richest woman Queen Elizabeth is practically limitless, styles himself as an adviser to the Vatican after a meeting he held with the Pope in his capacity as the president of the World Wide Fund for Nature. According to newspaper interviews, the Prince claims to have urged the Pope to renounce traditional church teachings on the sanctity of life, and instead to throw its weight behind a campaign to increase the animal population and decrease the human population. These philippics go far beyond the crimes of Adolf Hitler, for the Nazi regime at least felt obliged to keep its mass murders secret from the world, whereas Philip and the WWFN openly propagandize for such genocide.

Cardinal Ratzinger's speech not only rejects this hideous outlook, but it is intended too as a guide for the emerging reunification of Eastern and Western Europe. His plea on behalf of national sovereignty, with its implied support for the independence of Lithuania and the other Baltic states, is clear. In attacking the Babylonian model of imperialism, Ratzinger echoes the formulations often made by American thinker Lyndon LaRouche, who has shown in numerous writings

that the historic political conflict is between the oligarchist model first exemplified by the Babylonian model, and the republican nation-state that emerged in Solon's Athens. The full text of Ratzinger's speech follows.—Nora Hamerman

In the Gospel according to St. John there is a significant word of Jesus, by which he defends his working on Sabbath, but implicitly also his being born into the household of the worker Joseph, which many misused as an argument against his messianic dignity. Against this Jesus argues: "My father worketh hitherto, and I work" (St. John 5:17). With this the Lord wants to say, that God has not withdrawn, after an act of creation that presumably occurred a long time ago, into the retirement of an unlimited Sabbath leaving the world among its own. Because God is eternal presence, His act of creation comprehends all times and all history. God is continuously struggling for this world, shaping it. He has not once, in a far distant past, given the clay His spirit, but is continuously working so that the Spirit penetrates the clay, so that Man becomes God-like and thereby, the aim of creation is fulfilled (Rom. 8:19). In a continuous way, Christ is working on us, struggling for us, in order to make us adopt the form of the Son.

The pentecostal report of St. Luke (Apostles 2:1-11) shows the new phase of God's work on this world which began with the Resurrection of Christ. From him, the Man who is God's son, now God's breath, the Holy Spirit, is flowing into mankind with new force. What happens thereby? Unity is created, understanding grows, where alienation was before. The dispersed limbs of the body of mankind are being assembled. The single ones, touched by the Spirit, are drawn this way into the community with Christ, so that they become a new subject with him—one body, as St. Paul says: the Church. The effect of God's work on man is unity. By that He is recognized. And therefore the Church's first imprint on history is its universality. In the first moment of its coming into being the Church, speaks in all languages. Before there were local churches there was the whole Church, and the local churches are its daughter, which always have to measure themselves according to unity and universality. It is one of the essentials of the Church, that it transcends political and cultural borders. It is not by itself some kind of a new unitary state, but it is a ferment of unity which cuts right across all

borders drawn by man. Out of this a very concrete measure for our Christian life is born: Each seclusion into one's own ideas and forms is a signal of departing from the Holy Spirit. Particular acts of the local churches always have to flow into the common stream. Sure, the unity which is created by the Holy Spirit, has nothing to do with egalitarianism. That was the model of Babylon: the technical standard culture. Egalitarianism does not unite, but separates. While in Babylon, according to the Biblical report, only *one* language for all people was allowed, the Apostles speak in all languages, and the unity of the Spirit gives comprehension exactly in multiplicity. If the Church lives in all people and in the different institutions of society, it will become multi-colored by itself. But it always has to be characterized by its comprehension of all the others. Particular forms of local churches may never have an exclusive character; they always have to be open towards the whole. The Church fulfills its reconciling and unifying function only if it never identifies itself with a state or a cultural area. In all states and in all locations, it nevertheless must remain the Catholic one, the common house of all people, in which all recognize themselves.

If we read the report of St. Luke carefully, he tells us something much more concrete. In order to underline the universality of the Church from the first moment on, Luke presents a list of 12 peoples which he has taken over from Jewish or Hellenic reports. Twelve, the number of signs in the Zodiac, always is considered to be an expression of universality. But there something significant is being demonstrated: The horizon of the Hellenic circles, which ostensibly had drafted this list, is limited to parts of Asia and the western part of Northern Africa. It is the world of origin of Christendom which is being shown very clearly to our eyes. By way of its creation it absolutely is not, as can be seen, a Western entity. But Luke sees through the limitation of this alleged universality and adds to it three parts, which really have shaped history: As number thirteen he lists the Romans and by this broadens the view into the entire Western world up to Britannia and Germania—into those areas, which centuries later slowly became Europe. He also speaks about the Jews and Proselytes, i.e., the new unity of Israel and the peoples of the world; and finally he lists “Cretans and Arabs” as the symbol of West and East, for islands and mainland, in order to express again the universality of the new Man, the entire Christ. That means: The Holy Spirit breaks down all walls, which separate mankind. Christ passes through locked doors and gives peace.

What is being said here, is essential for every effort to create a renewed Europe of the future. Firstly: Europe was only created because of its meeting with Christ. Whenever it disengages from Christ, it dissolves itself. Europe came into being, because Christ passed through locked doors. Therefore one of the essentials of Europe is to look beyond itself. It has to take responsibility for the whole. It has to be the place for truth and peace for all people, because truth and

peace are inseparable. It came into being, through a process of unification of the divided, and therefore has to remain in the dynamics of unifying if it is to last at all. At this point, we really have to listen to St. Luke very carefully, in order not to come to false conclusions. To unify was also the program of Babylon. But the Babylonian way of unifying is subjugation, since uniformity always includes subjugation under a human form becoming hegemonic. Europe in its history has increasingly worked with this model of unification: Colonialism is a form of unifying, which in its historic effect has mounted abysses of separation, which apparently cannot be bridged. Technical civilization itself has led to a uniformity of thinking, wanting, living and shaping, which threatens to strangle the very uniqueness of different cultures. But it doesn't create unity. With it at the time the alienation of people among each other is growing, a new provincialism is rising up, the suspicion and the animosity of everyone against all is coming into being. Unity cannot be created by merely a human thought, by merely a human concept, because it would only help to bring to power just a part. True unity, true peace, can only come from Him, Who embraces us all from the most inner part of our being: from God's Son. Only He has the authority to say to all of us: Peace be with you. Only peace with God can give man peace with himself, and only thus can real peace among each other grow. This method illustrates how the Evangelical Message of today conveys something indispensable for our querying of today: without the conceiving of sin and the forgiving of it, there is no peace. Forgiveness is the method by which God works on us. And only He can unify the divided limbs of mankind through this particular work of his.

All this has gained a living meaning at this historic hour of ours, which should make the deaf hear and the blind see. Christ has instantly entered through the closely locked doors of the atheistic systems, and, from the eternity of His mercy and from the fraternity of His passion, has called to the fearful: peace be with you. The doors between East and West are open again. No skill of negotiating nor violence has been capable of throwing them open. He, the resurrected and living, He was capable of doing it. He is working on us every day, working on the world so that it becomes the Kingdom of God. It would be a tragic vision to imagine that Europe closed its doors to Him at this very hour, opting, instead, for the Babylonian model, the skill of making things without the involvement of God and the Holy Spirit. An arrogance of this type would be a victory of nihilism and thereby result in the rendering of mankind to the force of dispersion and destruction under which only the fight among antagonistic egotisms would prevail. But this nightmare does not have to become reality, however. Christ is in our midst. He also says to us: Peace be with you, and He shows us His pierced hands and His opened side. Let's open the doors for Him. Let's accept His peace. Let's participate in His creative work, so that His Kingdom come, God's Kingdom.