

Canopy of Prayer

May #66-2019

contributor
Ortwin Schweitzer



Dear praying friends in Europe

It was on Easter Sunday. The main Catholic church in Colombo/Sri Lanka was full of visitors when suddenly in the middle of the celebration of Mass an Islamist terrorist blew himself up and sent countless people to their deaths. A pointless crime, motivated by a blind hatred of Christians. But then something unexpected happened.

The young priest from the church stepped in front of the cameras of the whole world, turned to the surviving accomplices of the killers and said, "You should know, we forgive you and we love you." Words which seem to come from another world. These are the words of him who gave his life up to a senseless death for his enemies, thus breaking the hard shell of their hatred. And it is he who enables his followers to do the same: "Love your enemies ... bless those who curse you" (Lk 6:27f).

Ortwin Schweitzer

Blessing Europe

In six great steps, the "Prayer for Europe" has shown us how to stand before God for our continent (see "Special" No 60): In adoration of God's calling for Europe; in thankfulness for the deeds of his kindness among us; in intercession for all our shortcomings; in repentance over all guilt and sin of Europe until today; in the proclamation of his eternal promises as the truth over Europe. And now, as a conclusion, the authority to bless Europe.

Should we bless Europe?

So many people ask. For them Europe is lost, Europe whose godlessness deserves only God's judgment, as an enemy of the Gospel. I do not know if anyone who talks like that understands that their words are like curses, and the failings of Europe are further fixed. Is this our job as followers of Jesus?

Jesus died on the cross for us - for us pious! - "while we were still enemies" (Romans 5:10). He wins - the strong one - as the suffering servant of God (Is 53:12) and he calls his disciples onto the same track and says, "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who offend and hate you" (Luke 6:27f). Why? "So that you may be sons of your Father in Heaven" (Mt 5:45) - It is not "charity" that is the mark of Christians, but "love for the enemy." The blessing of our enemies is the breakthrough of the Kingdom of Heaven through hell and hate.



Blessing is always holistic

In blessing, the word and the sign come together to us. The sign is the touch of the hand that creates relationship and conveys proximity. When a church or a country or an entire continent is blessed, we raise our hands as well, and speak the blessing. The Blessing of Aaron (Numbers 6:24-26) is our guide. Blessing is not intercession ("Lord, please, do ..."), but is uttering what is on God's heart for that person, group, or continent, a direct word from God. The person blessing is only the mouthpiece,

but the prime mover is God. Therefore linguistically "May the Lord bless you ..." and not "bless you" - out of reverence for God, but in the confidence that God will stand by his Word. Especially when we speak out Bible words.

Let us pray,

- that Christians in all nations of Europe rise up stretching out their hands and, filled with the Holy Spirit, pronounce God's good intentions of mercy over Europe daily;
- that Christians experience how, through blessing, they can release God's work and often turn around the reality of this world;
- that people who bless notice how they are blessed themselves by doing so.



**Jeff Fountain of the Schuman
Centre writes:**

"A year ago, we began the May 9 Project to encourage Europeans everywhere to celebrate our connectedness and interdependence, our unity with diversity and our common spiritual heritage. We launched the www.may9.eu website to offer ideas for how to observe the day.' Do take a look and be inspired!

Additional prayer points:-

1. **Let us pray** that all those who want to see the gift of the European Union in a positive way and develop it democratically will be strengthened by the elections.
2. **Let us pray** that the Western Balkans will be freed from hatred and fear, and reconciliation will come about especially between Serbia and Kosovo.

CONTACT Canopy of Prayer,
Ortwin Schweitzer, Ian Jeal,
Corrie Oosterhuis
info@canopyofprayer.eu
www.canopyofprayer.eu

DONATION Waechterruf e.V.,
IBAN DE73 6129 0120 0464 0500 06
BIC GENODES1NUE
Use "Project 2100", Name and
Address