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## Dear praying friends in Europe –

Whether in the church or in society, yes, the whole creation consists of innumerable connections and contexts. Every individual is always part of a larger entity. Paul explains this fact in referring to the church to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 22) in the image of the body, with its many members. "The body does is not of one member, but of many" (verse 14). Each limb is different and has its own specific purpose. Yet, the body as a whole appears when the limbs work together in a reconciled diversity. This happens when each member is valued by the others in their function. And conversely, each member wants to see and promote the whole entity beyond itself.

Another picture of understanding this togetherness is the family and its members. An example: the family of the European states.



Ortwin Schweitzer

## The European Family of Nations

What a blessing to be part of a good family!

### What is "a family"?

Family means belonging together lifelong. This gives all members a feeling of shelter. They have a "family identity" expressed in their common name. Inside they develop something like a "family style", a lifestyle and a conviction of common values, of what is good and what is evil. Quarrels are normal in a family, even longer periods of disagreement. These times are painful, but that's because the members of the family feel basically their togetherness. They suffer because they want to love each other. Therefore, if a member of the family suddenly expresses that it wants to leave the family, we feel that this is a tragedy. We speak of "a broken family".

**There is a hidden pattern** behind all "families", natural or so called ones: It is a permanent act of balance. Two things have to be balanced: the rights of the individual and the rights of the "family". The claim of the individual is for "freedom", the claim of the "family" is for "solidarity". Every person who belongs to a group has an identity as an individual, but as a member of a group it has also a "family identity". As an individual a person is 100% free to do what he/she wants to do. As soon, however, when he/she want to belong to a group, this person conveys certain individual rights to the group and its leadership. This pattern is true for any group. Also for the EU.

### Please also pray

- EC President Donald Tusk has made a remarkable proposal, not to allow the question of the migrants split the Union.
- May God lit the fire of joy and thankfulness especially among the youth about Europe and God's plans of salvation in it.

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Let us apply this teaching to Europe as a "family of nations". Are we a family? Yes we are! You can easily notice it if you compare the cultural group of Europe with the cultural groups of moslem countries, of Africa or Japan or China. All these cultures are very different from the European culture family which is based on Christianity. And Christian values like repentance and forgiveness were the basis of starting a closer cooperation between the European nations after WW II. in becoming a "family of nations" But mind: It was the free decision of each nation to become a member of this "family".

**And "family" means on the European level** the same as on the personal one: Enjoying the togetherness, helping each other, protecting one another against outside, having the same "Family values" as freedom, democracy etc. But we also have quarrels and even a tragic exit. Are we still a family of the same extraction and values? Yes we are! We suffer – at the moment between East and West – because we all believe that we are yet belonging together. So let us anew love and accept one another.

### Let us pray for

- Renewal of the joy and thankfulness of belonging together.
- Let us bless especially our counter-parts and show them love.
- May the Body of Christ become through prayer and protest against all tendencies of splitting the "family" a healing factor in the present situation of Europe.