

ROBERT SCHUMAN'S COMMITMENT TO EUROPEAN UNIFICATION: THE INSPIRING ROLE OF HIS ROMAN CATHOLIC FAITH

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Abstract

With the EU struggling to maintain itself, it is highly relevant to look into the drive for and original vision on European unification of its principal architect, Robert Schuman, then French Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Schuman Declaration (1950) gave birth to the EU and procured the longest period of peace among its member states since the Treaty of Verdun (843). This article shows how Schuman's Catholic faith influenced his life and therefore his politics. His drive to be a faithful instrument of Providence, supported by his origins from Alsace-Lorraine, made him strive towards peace on the European continent. He envisaged a European political integration through economic cooperation at the service of man and his transcendence and rooted in the common European spiritual and cultural heritage. This implied reconciliation, effective solidarity, subsidiarity and supra-nationality for European common interests through an integration in small steps.

Keywords

Schuman, European integration, man with transcendence, solidarity, subsidiarity, Christianity, Catholicism, politics

1 Introduction

The European Union is having a hard time these days. Distrust and skepticism among "Eurosceptic" citizens seem to be counterbalanced by the Europhiles' wish to integrate countries as soon as possible (Aalbers 2014, 7-14, 59). In this state of European turmoil a reflection on the person and thoughts of the "Father of Europe" and principal architect of European unification, Robert Schuman, will be enlightening.¹

Robert Schuman was Minister of Foreign Affairs of France at the time he launched the Schuman Declaration, the kick-off of the European integration project. This led to the first step of European integration with the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951.

This article will show that the Roman Catholic faith can be considered Schuman's main source of inspiration for his dedication to European unification. This does not mean that the European unification project was a Catholic project. Schuman himself even remarked that 'The Vatican Europe is a myth' (Fimister 2008, 227; Archives Départementales, 43J31; Roth 2008, 330). But because his faith engendered his desire to correspond to his personal calling by God, it also found its expression in the way he saw, worked towards and realized the fundamental structure and first steps of European

¹ This article is based on Margriet Krijtenburg's dissertation, *Schuman's Europe. His frame of reference* (2012), of which the French translation, *L'Europe de Schuman. Ses Racines*, was published on 4 September 2013, at the occasion of Schuman's 50th death anniversary. Many of the references are also retrieved from the Schuman Archives of the Maison de Robert Schuman in Scy-Chazelles and the Archives of the Département de la Moselle in Metz. The original French texts of citations translated from French into English by the author will be provided in the footnotes.

unification. He envisioned an integration that encouraged the citizen's personal development and subsequently the improvement of society.

The article starts off with a biographical introduction to Schuman and the impact of his background on his ideas about European integration. This will be followed by an explanation of the Catholic faith as his main personal source of inspiration. Then it will be elucidated what guiding insights and principles for European unification Schuman derived from his faith. The principles that Schuman articulated still seem appropriate for European and world politics today.

2 Robert Schuman (1886-1963): European Citizen from a Conflictive Border Region

Robert Schuman laid the first stone of an integration project that was and is unique in world history. He achieved with the Schuman Declaration the first peaceful revolution on the European continent. Schuman's religious and regional background had a strong impact on his life and on his thoughts about European unification as will be made clear in the following part. The political circumstances made him put his ideas into effect.

Schuman was born in Luxembourg on 27 June 1886. His father was from Lorraine, the conflictive north-eastern border region of France. He had changed nationality from French to German after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 and because of this Schuman's mother, who was from Luxembourg, became German as well. Schuman was therefore born a German, but considered himself to be foremost a Lorraine citizen. He was raised a practicing Catholic. Living his childhood in Luxembourg, he became familiar with the Luxembourgian, Belgian, German and French mentalities and cultures and spoke the three languages fluently.

After his *Abitur* in Strasbourg, Schuman studied German civil law in Bonn, Munich, Berlin and Strasbourg (PhD). He was a member of the Catholic Student Union *Unitas* which had Thomas Aquinas as its patron saint and lived its motto '*In necessariis unitas, in dubio libertas, in omnibus caritas*' (unity in necessary things; liberty when there is doubt; charity in all things). This motto and more of Aquinas' philosophical and theological observations would later on be reflected in Schuman's thoughts (Sabine & Thorson 1973, 236, 237) on European integration. Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903) strongly recommended in his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879) to study Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) for providing deep philosophical insights (Pope Leo XIII 1879, n.1). Aquinas' thoughts on subsidiarity find their echo in this Pope's famous encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), in the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) of Pope Pius XI, and via these also in Schuman's thoughts about the way the European integration should take place. Through his study of Thomism, Schuman consolidated his own philosophy of nature, man and morality. He highly appreciated Aquinas' dialectic method for its thorough analysis of reality that is able to distinguish contrastive elements and to subsequently bring them together through the dialectic of conciliation and reconciliation. This way of thinking perfectly suited Schuman's constant striving for peace and harmony amongst peoples and nations.

Schuman's drive from childhood onwards was to find a solution to the seemingly everlasting problem of enmity between France and what is now called Germany. From the Treaty of Verdun in 843 until 1945, there had been constant wars on the European continent. Alsace-Lorraine was nearly always involved in those wars for being a border region and for its riches in natural resources such as coal and steel, materials that were (also) needed for the arms industry. During his studies, Schuman acknowledged already that peace could only be attained through reconciliation between the archenemies Germany and France.

He started his policy of reconciliation politically from the moment Alsace-Lorraine returned to France after the First World War in 1918 and he was chosen to be its representative in the French parliament in 1919. He continued this constant policy even during the Second World War when he was imprisoned as first parliamentarian by the Gestapo. It is known that he read books on the history of the popes while he was in prison (1940). He thus knew about the centuries old Roman Catholic discourse aimed at overcoming both the spiritual and the political partition of Europe. He acknowledged the bright and the dark sides and the necessity to have a proper separation between Church and state in which they complement each other so as avoid both a theocratic and an 'integralist' secular society (see later in this article). After this war he strove towards the Franco-

German reconciliation as Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, during which the Schuman Declaration came about on 9 May 1950.

As mentioned above this Declaration was a unique act that brought forth a unique kind of integration in world history. It did not only imply reconciliation between the two archenemies, but also effective solidarity by surrendering part of the national sovereignty to a supra-national entity. This was done in the field of coal and steel. The instruments of war became the instruments of peace. The common interests were safeguarded by the supra-national High Authority, the current European Commission, so that war, using Schuman's words of the Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950, would not only become 'unthinkable, but also impossible'. The result is that there has never been such a long period of peace among the EU member states as the 65 years of peace since the Schuman Declaration (1950). The EU received the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2012.

3 Schuman's Source of Inspiration: His Catholic Faith

Robert Schuman was a man of Catholic faith (Poidevin 1986, 16-26; Lejeune 2000, 37, 38, 51-58, 211; Fimister 2008, 224-227; Pennera 1985, 175-214; Krijtenburg 2012, 24-35; Archives Maison Robert Schuman, RS 11-14; Archives Départementales de la Moselle, 19J688). This imbued his entire being and therefore also his way of thinking about European unification. It made him envision the principles and concepts that should lead the integration process in which man with his transcendence occupied the pivotal role. His faith translated itself politically first of all into his reconciliation policy from the moment he entered the French parliament in 1919. This intent culminated in the Schuman Declaration of 1950. His faith provided his personal flourishing and made that he was known by friend and foe for his integrity in all his doings, both in daily life and professionally.

Schuman firmly believed in the personal vocation to sanctity of each human being. This universal call to sanctity, or sanctification of daily life, proper to Catholic faith (Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 1:15), was and still is also the essential message of the Personal Prelature of the Opus Dei, which coincidentally was founded in Schuman's time by St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer in 1928. It was judicially erected as Personal Prelature by St. John Paul II in 1982. The call to holiness for lay people was a key concept of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), made explicit in its Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (Chapter 5). The Council was initiated by Pope John XXIII, former nuncio of France in Paris, who once visited Schuman in his home at Scy-Chazelles. Schuman met him later as Pope John XXIII in Rome.

Schuman's deep faith, conviction and *leitmotiv* in life, mentioned in a letter (1942) to his colleague and later biographer, Robert Rochefort, was (Roth 2008, 562; Krijtenburg 2012, 9):

We're all instruments, however imperfect, of a Providence who uses them to accomplish grand designs which surpass us. This certainty obliges us to a great deal of modesty but also confers on us a serenity that our own personal experiences would not justify if we consider them from a purely human point of view.

A crucial moment in Schuman's life that illustrates his determination to follow the path of faith occurred when his mother died in an accident in 1911. Schuman, aged 25, had then a moment of doubt regarding his vocation in life; whether it was the vocation to priesthood or to remain a lawyer. A friend of his, Henri Eschbach, convinced him by saying that he should continue as a lay person, adding that 'the saints of the future will be saints in suits (*saints en veston*)'. According to Eschbach Schuman should help to change the world from within and make it a better place to live, as this would suit him perfectly: 'I cannot imagine a better apostle than you [...] you should remain a lay person because you will then succeed better in doing good, which is your sole preoccupation' (Pennera 1985, 31; Poidevin 1986, 16; Fimister 2008, 148; Roth 2008, 562; Krijtenburg 2012, 26; Archives Départementales de la Moselle, 34J1).

Schuman then firmly decided to give heed to his call to sanctity as a layman through his professional and daily life. This also made him decide eight years later to accept his election as selected candidate for the French parliament. Although he never aspired to be a politician, he became one from 1919 to 1962, a year before he died.

Schuman's faith as source of inspiration explains also his going to daily Mass, his life of prayer, his thorough knowledge of the Roman Catholic faith and his familiarity with Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* and thoughts on universal synthesis and need of conciliation and harmony; the latter found their echo in Schuman's reconciliation policy. Schuman lived according to his faith and was highly appreciated for its outcome in intelligence, sincerity, humility, friendliness, and many more virtues that he lived even during severe political debates (Lejeune 2000). The way he lived his faith and the ethics that go with it and the way in which he fulfilled his tasks as a member of parliament and later as a Minister show a surprising integrity of life.² Using his compatriot and philosopher Jacques Maritain's words, it is possible to say that Schuman sanctified the secular (Maritain 1968, 130).

Schuman's personality as a politician seems to underline this thought when we consider the testimonies to this, such as André Philip's (1902–1970), Professor in Politics, Commissioner of the French Committee of National Liberation and later of General De Gaulle's provisional government in London and Algiers, socialist Deputy of the Rhône and Minister of Finance and of National Economy. Himself a Protestant, Philip observed that Schuman's personality was led by his Catholic faith, expressed in his motto that he had only come to serve (Lejeune 2000; Krijtenburg 2012, 54, 55):

What first struck me about him was how his interior life shone forth; he was, it seemed to me, a dedicated man without personal desires, without ambition, of a total sincerity and intellectual honesty, who only sought to serve where he felt the call to serve. By tradition he was conservative, hostile to innovations, by temperament he was peaceful, shy and hesitant. Often he hedged, delayed his decision, tried to finesse with the call he felt in the depth of his conscience. Then, when there was nothing else to do and he was sure of what his interior voice was demanding of him, he would brusquely take the most courageous initiatives and push them to their logical conclusion, unmoved by critics, attacks or threats.

Illustrative of the way Schuman integrated his personal experiences, his faith and his political commitment is also the testimony of Schuman's friend, Henri Brugmans, President of the College of Europe in Bruges (1950-1972), given at the occasion of Schuman's reception of the Charlemagne Award in 1958 (Brugmans 2010, 28):

This politician is not only a man of State, but also a man who pulls his strength from the fullness and depth of a universal spiritual life, because there, even the word 'Europe' becomes too tight. Rooted in his home country he is a European from Lorraine. But he is still more: a friend of humanity, a member of this humanity, a man, in short.³

4 Schuman's Faith and the European Unification

Schuman's faith explains not only his personal conduct but also his identification of the key reason for European integration itself as well as the core values and principles that would ensure European peace and proper political unification. For Schuman the heart of these principles was his Catholic-inspired insight into the pivotal role of man with his transcendence. Out of this center, he developed his view on European integration and on the principles that should lead it: the importance of democracy and the separation of church and state as well as reconciliation, effective solidarity, subsidiarity, supra-nationality, and ultimately Europe's calling in the world at large.

² Poidevin 1988, 239: '[...] il n'y a pas chez lui deux éthiques : une éthique de conviction, le dimanche à la messe, et une éthique de responsabilité toute différente pour la semaine et ses occupations ministérielles. Il justifie la proposition de Max Weber: 'l'éthique de la conviction et l'éthique de la responsabilité ne sont pas contradictoires, mais elles se complètent l'une l'autre et constituent ensemble *l'homme authentique*, c'est-à-dire un homme qui peut prétendre à la 'vocation politique'. See also Villarós 2006, 103-120.

³ 'Ce politique n'est pas seulement un homme d'État, mais il est aussi un homme qui tire ses forces de la plénitude et de la profondeur d'une vie spirituelle universelle - car là, même le mot 'Europe' devient trop étroit. Enraciné dans sa patrie, il est un Européen de Lorraine. Mais il est plus encore: un ami de l'humanité, un membre de cette humanité - un homme en somme.'

4.1 *The Faith-Informed Unifying Centre of Schuman's Political Vision: Man and His Transcendence*

The unifying center of all his political beliefs and principles is for Schuman the insight that man and his transcendence have to play the pivotal role in society and therefore also in politics and economics. This was, and still is, the preaching of the Social Doctrine of the Church, which says (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 384):

The human person is the foundation and purpose of political life. Endowed with a rational nature, the human person is responsible for his own choices and able to pursue projects that give meaning to life at the individual and social level. Being open both to the Transcendent and to others is his characteristic and distinguishing trait. Only in relation to the Transcendent and to others does the human person reach the total and complete fulfillment of himself. This means that for the human person, a naturally social and political being, 'social life is not something added on' but is part of an essential and indelible dimension.

As a side remark it can be observed that in today's Europe man seems to have become an instrument of the economy and politics and that this might well be the main reason why all the other aspects, such as reconciliation, effective solidarity, and subsidiarity are also only regarded from the economic and political perspective (Schlag 2013, 40). The economy and politics lack the *quid* around which those concepts gear, which is human dignity including transcendence. The latter facilitates personal development and fraternity and therewith reconciliation, solidarity and subsidiarity among peoples and thus also states.

As said before, Schuman saw each and every man as an instrument in the hands of Providence which had grand designs for him or her. Schuman acknowledged the Catholic conviction that each person is called by God to become a saint. Politics and economy need to be means to enhance man's growth and development.

4.2 *Raison d'être of European Unification*

Schuman's faith explains that he – and with him Adenauer, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Alcide de Gasperi, Prime Minister of Italy - saw the European spiritual and cultural heritage as the primary *raison d'être* of the European unification, and not the threat of communism, of a third World War, or the need to work together because of the Marshall Aid, as is often believed. These latter factors may also have facilitated the need for unity, but the European spirit that came forth from this heritage was for Schuman the soul of the European integration process. This heritage included the Greek-Roman tradition and the Judeo-Christian roots of our civilizations (Krijtenburg 2012, 52; Brague 2002) which among others form the base of our systems of education, care and law.

The European spirit signifies being conscious of belonging to a cultural family and to have a willingness to serve that community in the spirit of total mutuality, without any hidden motives of hegemony or the selfish exploitation of others.

Schuman warned for the danger of focusing primarily on the "secondary" results or means of unification, saying (Schuman 2010b, 58):

This 'whole' cannot and must not remain an economic and technical enterprise: it needs a soul, the conscience of its historical affinities and of its responsibilities, in the present and in the future, and a political will at the service of the same human ideal.

These thoughts informed the Schuman Declaration that contained implicitly or explicitly many of the core values and principles discussed below.

Regarding the Schuman Declaration as such, Krijtenburg (2012, 117-123) explains that in the genesis of the Declaration the assistance of Jean Monnet, head of the French Planning Commission, was important indeed, but that he was not the intellectual father of the Schuman Declaration, as is often believed.

4.2.1 Democracy

For Schuman a secular society is not an 'integralist' secular society (Rhonheimer 2009), which is a secularity that informs all fields, takes their religious elements out and fosters an anti-religious society. In itself, a secular society does not need to be an anti-Christian society: Christianity and a democratic government can be perfectly compatible. Schuman himself regards democracy even as a product of Christian faith (Schuman 2010b, 43):

Democracy owes its existence to Christianity. It was born the day man was required to set the best example, during his life on earth [i.e. by respecting human dignity, individual rights and freedom and by exercising brotherly love towards his neighbor]. Before Christ, ideas such as this had never been expressed.

Schuman regarded democracy as essentially Christian since it was based on the typically Christian principle of the equality of men, including equal rights before the law. He saw Europe as the place where democracy should find its total development, precisely because it is the continent in which Christianity forms a pivotal part of cultural heritage (Schuman 2010b, 43-45; Brague 2002).

4.2.2 Separation of Church and State

However, Schuman insisted that Christianity is not and must not be integrated into a political system and therefore should also not be identified with any form of government, however democratic it might be. He stressed the importance of separation of church and state affairs in this regard, saying (Schuman 2010b, 46-47; see also Matt. 22:21; Krijtenburg 2012, 228):

We must distinguish what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God. Each of these powers has its own responsibilities. The Church has to make sure that natural laws and truths are respected: however, it should not become the judge of concrete choices which have to be made from a practical point of view in line with the opportunities of the moment or that arise due to psychological and historical developments. The responsible politician's task consists in reconciling these two ideas: the spiritual and the secular. Our lives often become confused because of the problems we face and the choices we have to make, especially in the passion of controversy. However, no conflict involving these two requirements is insolvable, since one is an immutable doctrine of principles and the other implies wise administration of changing situations that have to be considered in the lives of populations and individuals.

Schuman thus explains that the separation of Church and state consists in their having different tasks and that the two should complement each other. The task of the Church is to hold a moral mirror to the state. The task of the state is to take that mirror into account and to subsequently make its decisions. The Church has as "moral guard" an independent position and is therefore not influenced by majorities or minorities. This also implies that the Church can never take over the tasks of the state nor impose its influence.

4.2.3 Effective Solidarity

Proper to this concept of man is that it goes beyond frontiers and implies effective solidarity within and beyond borders so as to help each other grow in sanctity. In 1939, Pope Pius XII (1939, 42, 43) said the following about this:

In the light of this unity of all mankind, which exists in law and in fact, individuals do not feel themselves isolated units, like grains of sand, but united by the very force of their nature and by their internal destiny, into an organic, harmonious mutual relationship which varies with the changing of times. And the nations, despite a difference of development due to diverse conditions of life and of culture, are not destined to break the unity of the human race, but rather to enrich and embellish it by the sharing of their own peculiar gifts and by that reciprocal interchange of goods which can be possible and efficacious only when a mutual love and a lively sense of charity unite all the sons of the same Father and all those redeemed by the same Divine Blood.

Man's nature as a social being is also stressed by Schuman's other contemporary, Pope Paul VI, in *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) where he says: 'For by his innermost nature man is a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential.'⁴

The effective solidarity Schuman spoke about was a solidarity expressed through concrete deeds of integration that contribute in the short or in the long run to the benefit of all peoples and states concerned. Since the integration primarily concerns man, Schuman warned that the human psyche needed to be taken into account, and that the integration of interests should therefore take place step by step and not more than needed so as not to have a counterproductive effect upon the citizens and endanger the entire project. He said the following during his speech at the Council of Europe in 1949 (Krijtenburg 2012, 69, 218):

We are still at the start of things. We would do well to bridle our impatience. If not, we are likely to make the doubters more distrustful and what is more serious, endanger not only the experiment but also the whole idea of a united Europe.

This implied that supra-nationality, the integration on a level above the national level, was only needed for common European interests. National interests needed to be safeguarded unless they went against those common European interests.

4.2.4 Reconciliation

As mentioned before, Schuman practiced a policy of Franco-German reconciliation from the moment he was chosen into the French parliament in 1919, i.e. after the First World War when he had just changed his nationality from German to French and the Treaty of Versailles (a Treaty of Revenge) had been recently signed.

The fact that he continued this policy of reconciliation even during the Second World War, when he was caught by the Gestapo (1940) and wanted by the Germans for a large amount of money after his escape in 1942, can be considered a clear expression of faith. Also after the war when he occupied several ministerial posts and became Prime Minister he continued this policy, for he was convinced that this was the only way to acquire peace. Not surprisingly, this policy was vehemently opposed by many, especially the communists, nationalists and Gaullists.

4.2.5 Subsidiarity

Schuman's deep Catholic faith also explains his stress on the practice of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, such as explained in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) which, because of its introduction of subsidiarity and social solidarity, can be considered one of the cornerstones of Catholic social doctrine regarding politics.

An example of Schuman's application of subsidiarity before the Schuman Declaration is his adaptation in 1919 of the laws of Alsace-Lorraine to those of the Central Administration of France characterized by the *laïcité*. He came up with the then revolutionary *Lex Schuman* ("Schuman's law") in which the regional interests, e.g. religion-education in public schools and the social laws introduced by Bismarck after conquering Alsace-Lorraine (1871), were safeguarded. Researcher David Price comments on this:

[The *Lex Schuman*] was called 'the greatest act of legal unification attempted to then and, moreover, accomplished with the approval of the populations concerned.' The key principles were later applied in the Convention of Human Rights and the European Community.⁵

He thus put into practice *Rerum Novarum*'s principle of subsidiarity, and he did the same later on regarding European integration. He believed that what could be done on an exclusively local, regional, national, or European level, should be done at that particular level. He foresaw that only the necessary common interests had to be safeguarded by a supra-national institution, and that the

⁴ Pope Paul VI, Vaticanum II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 12. See also Schlag 2013.

⁵ Price, David Heilbron, 'Human Rights and the new definition of Europe', *Schuman Project*, Bron Communications 1999-2008, www.schuman.info.

interests of the state should be protected unless these went against those common European interests, which in their turn should take universal interests into account.

4.2.6 Nationality and Supra-Nationality

Schuman was very explicit about the need to safeguard national interests as much as possible and to not give in to ego-nationalistic desires, but to foster solidarity (Schuman 2010b, 30, 35):

We are not, and we shall never be, given to deny our mother country; we shall never forget our duties towards it. But beyond each country, we increasingly and clearly acknowledge the existence of a common good, superior to national interest. A common good into which our countries' individual interests are merged.

We shall have to replace all the tendencies inherited from the past with the notion of solidarity, that is to say the conviction that the real interest of all lies in acknowledging and accepting the interdependency of all. Egoism does not pay any more.

According to Schuman, people can foster their patriotic ideal but have to acknowledge equally the interdependency of nations and the need for solidarity between and among nations. The common interests are to be safeguarded by the supra-national organization and should be consistent with the subsidiarity and solidarity principles; in this way they will foster the national development of all European member states in the short or in the long run.

Europe needs a living faith, enthusiasm, abnegation and magnanimity. She will be created and her viability will need to be maintained by the young people and because of them, that is, with the active help of those who tomorrow will carry the heavy burden of assuring a future that is more or less threatened. We should not forget in this regard that it is the errors of the past generations that created this situation.

This call directed towards the young people (...) [requires] that the continuity and the cooperation of the best people of all ages and categories be assured.⁶

4.2.7 Europe's Universal Calling

Schuman's observations surprise for their topicality regarding the kind of connection that is needed between the national and European interests. However, Schuman did not limit his thoughts to the European continent but went beyond and focused on Europe's Christian vocation of fraternity as is echoed in the following statement:

This Europe which is still split up and torn continues to be ever more aware of its calling to become the heart of a pacific cooperation of all peoples and of all races at the service of a humanity that embraces all continents.⁷

He clearly indicates the need to take into account not only the European but also the universal common good. The latter should not be a detriment to the former and vice versa. Schuman also reminds the European countries of their responsibility towards the formerly colonized territories during his speech at the Council of Europe in 1949 (Krijtenburg 2012, 69, 218), saying:

⁶ Schuman 2010c, 58: 'L'Europe a besoin d'un foi vivante, d'enthousiasme, d'abnégation et de magnanimité. Elle sera créée et sa viabilité devra être maintenue par et pour la jeunesse, c'est-à-dire avec l'aide active de ceux à qui reviendra demain la lourde charge d'assurer un avenir plus ou moins menacé. Nous ne devons à ce sujet pas oublier que ce sont les erreurs des générations passées qui ont créé cette situation'. 'Pareil appel à la jeunesse ne doit pas être compris comme un plaidoyer en faveur d'une rupture révolutionnaire entre les générations. Au contraire: il est indispensable que reste assurée la continuité et la coopération des meilleurs éléments de toutes les classes d'âge et catégories de population'. See also Krijtenburg 2012, 162, n. 409.

⁷ Schuman 2010a, 30: 'L'Europe qui est encore aujourd'hui divisée et déchirée, continue de prendre toujours plus conscience de sa vocation à former le cœur d'une coopération pacifique de tous les peuples et de toutes les races au service d'une humanité embrassant tous les continents'. See also Krijtenburg 2012, 157, n. 402.

Today Christianity, enriched by the lived experience along its own history, should help the peoples that are less evolved to adopt the same track of human regeneration. The colonizing nations have not always fully understood their role. The colonizer and the missionary were not always led by the same noble and generous inspiration. The economic capitalism lent itself too easily to methods of egoistic exploitation and neglected the meaning of human responsibility.

We could conclude that Schuman's subsidiarity and solidarity principles slowly but surely concern the entire world, causing people to change their defensive attitude toward each other into an open and engaging attitude. Schuman says the following (Schuman 2010b, 26-27):

What Europe wants is to uplift the rigidity of its borders. They should become the lines of contact where the material and cultural exchanges take place. They define the particular tasks, responsibilities and innovations proper to each country taking into account as well the problems all countries together - and even the continents - face and thus foster solidarity.

This is a clear output of the influence of faith on Schuman's politics which is again highly topical regarding the role of the EU in the world. Equally so are his encouraging words to younger and older generations to feed and maintain the aim of a reconciled and unified Europe characterized by Christian fraternity:

That this idea of a reconciled Europe, unified and strong, may be from now on the word of order for the young generations that are wanting to serve a humanity that is finally free from hate and fear and that, after too long periods of pain and hurt, learns again what Christian fraternity means.⁸

5 Conclusion: Europe's Challenge

Schuman's main source of inspiration, his Catholic faith, originated his desire to be a faithful instrument of Providence. This translated itself politically into his policies that led to the Schuman Declaration in 1950, which procured the longest period of peace among the member states since the Treaty of Verdun in 843. His policy of reconciliation, commencing the moment he entered the French parliament as a representative of the conflictive Alsace-Lorraine border region in 1919, ultimately bore fruit.

Schuman's Catholic background, his origin from the Franco-German conflictive border region, and his political circumstances contributed to the realization of his grand ideal to make war not only unthinkable, but also impossible on the European continent. His wish to give heed to his vocation to become a 'saint in suit' implied, professionally speaking, the task of acquiring peace on the European continent, based on the common spiritual and cultural heritage. The political means - next to safeguarding justice, human rights, and rule of law - were reconciliation, effective solidarity beyond borders, subsidiarity and supra-national action on and protection of common European interests consistent with universal interests; all this is in line with the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church.

Christianity and world politics came to a fruitful union and expression in Schuman's person and actions. The way he answered the divine call to sanctity in the middle of the world makes him an inspiring person who is now therefore in the process of beatification.⁹ This is exceptional: the last politician that was beatified - and canonized - was Sir Thomas More (1478-1535). Stronger evidence for the intricate relation between a statesman's inspiration and politics is hardly possible.

⁸ Robert Schuman, inauguration speech *doctor honoris causa* at Tilburg University (then Roomsche Katholieke Handelshoogeschool), 13 December 1952. Archives Départementales de la Moselle, 34J26. 'Que cette idée d'une Europe réconciliée, unie et forte soit désormais le mot d'ordre pour les jeunes générations désireuses de servir une humanité enfin affranchie de la haine et de la peur, et qui réapprend, après de trop longs déchirements, la fraternité chrétienne'. See also Krijtenburg 2012, 161, n. 408.

⁹ www.zenit.org (2004), 'Beatification Process for Robert Schuman Clears One Phase'. www.eui.eu/Research/ArchivesOfEU/News/2013/06-21 (2013), 'Archival collection on Beatification Process for Robert Schuman'. See also www.robert-schuman.com (1999 - 2008).

The way Schuman envisaged the integration to take place is still very topical because of its stressing of its core values and principles. According to Schuman, the following issues are fundamental to proper integration and citizenship:

1. Acknowledgement of the common spiritual and cultural European roots in which man with his transcendence occupies the pivotal role. Man should be able to flourish and give heed to his vocation.
2. Application of the subsidiarity and solidarity principles at regional, national, European, and universal level. The economy and politics need to serve primarily the person in his development and not the other way round (which would turn the human person into an instrument of the economy or politics).

Following Schuman's line of thought, we may conclude that the core of today's problems goes beyond the economic crisis in that it resides precisely in the partial or total negation of the above mentioned principles that gear around the acknowledgement of the pivotal role of man and his transcendence. Pope Francis's words spoken in the European Parliament on 25 November 2014 are in line with this conclusion:

The time has come to work together in building a Europe which revolves not around the economy, but around the sacredness of the human person, around inalienable values. [...] A Europe which cares for, defends and protects man, every man and woman. A Europe which bestrides the earth surely and securely, a precious point of reference for all humanity!¹⁰

It is a stirring challenge. Is the European Union up to it?

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¹⁰ Pope Francis, Address of Pope Francis to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 25 November 2014.
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