

Press Release n. 2

Together for Europe – a prophetic sign of unity

A Meeting of “Friends of *Together for Europe*” (*TfE*)

Ottmaring / Augsburg (Germany): 7 – 9 November, 2019

About 170 representatives of many Christian Communities and Movements from Eastern and Western Europe will come together at Ottmaring and Augsburg on 7 – 9 November, 2019. The more than 300 Christian Movements and Organizations of *TfE* are aware how important it is, at this point in time, to offer and to be a sign of unity in Europe. Thus they overcome individualism and the fear of being in contact. “*To grow together entails a big effort. However, the synergy generated frees new forces and ideas for a Christian Europe*”. (Fr Heinrich Walter, member of the Steering Committee).

The ecumenical Centre of Ottmaring saw the birth of *TfE* 20 years ago; also, Augsburg, the city of peace, is where the “Joint Declaration on the doctrine of Justification” (JDDJ) was signed 20 years ago in St Anne’s Church. It is in these two places that the participants at the Meeting desire, on behalf of their Organizations and Movements, to seek a response for *the signs of the times*: reconciliation instead of conflict, Christian love instead of hate. During the Meeting the representatives of the European Christian Movements will take a look at their history, but also, an above all, they will look at the future. “*TfE may help Europe to become a strong tree. It is a prophetic sign of unity*” (Sr. Nicole Grochowina, member of the Steering Committee).

The signing of the Joint Declaration on the doctrine of Justification (JDDJ)

In 1999, for the first time ever, the World Lutheran Federation and the Roman Catholic Church have formally expressed their agreement regarding the doctrine of Justification, which was a key issue of the Reformation. This allowed both Churches to eliminate from their teachings the centuries-old mutual condemnations on this issue. In 2006, the World Council of the Methodist Churches endorsed the Joint Declaration; and in 2007, the World Communion of Reformed Churches – WCRC, did the same. The Anglican Communion proclaimed its substantial approval on Reformation Day of that same year. *TfE* considers itself as a living fruit of the Declaration.

Four commemorative moments

The Meeting falls on the 20th anniversary, almost to the day, of the signing of the JDDJ and the setting up of *TfE*; besides it would be exactly 30 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and 81 years after the 1938 “Night of crystals”. In such a context *TfE* reaffirms its common objective, which such past events reinforce: to translate the basic values of the Christian faith into concrete responses to the challenges that a Continent in crisis is facing.

Program

The program of the Meeting of the “Friends of *TfE*” includes keynote speeches, many dialogues and discussions, prayers and the sharing of experiences regarding Europe. Among others the topics shall be: the challenges that today’s Europe is facing; 30 years without the Iron Curtain; *TfE* – a fruit of the JDDJ. In honour of this initiative, the city of Augsburg has invited all participants for a reception on November 8 in the “Golden Hall” of the historical Town Hall.

On Saturday, November 9, another 100 representatives of *TfE* from Germany will join in. This enlarged group of “Friends” will meet during the day in the famous "Oberer Fletz" hall of the Town Hall and will end the day with an evening solemn prayer for Europe in the nearby church of St Anne.

November 1, 2019

For further information and photos: www.together4europe.org