

"evaluation of the benefits" is the only way to moral discernment and that the common good is synonymous with compromise. In reality, if compromise can constitute a legitimate balance between different particular interests, it becomes a common evil whenever it involves agreements that dishonour human nature.

A community built **without respect for the true dignity of the human being**, disregarding the fact that every person is created in the image of God **ends up doing no good to anyone.** For this reason it seems ever more important that Europe be on guard against the pragmatic attitude, widespread today, which systematically justifies compromise on essential human values, as if it were the inevitable acceptance of a lesser evil. This kind of pragmatism, even when presented as balanced and realistic, is in reality neither, since it denies the dimension of values and ideals inherent in human nature. When non-religious and relativistic tendencies are woven into this pragmatism, **Christians as such are eventually denied the very right to enter into the public discussion**, or their contribution is discredited as an attempt to preserve unjustified privileges. In this historical hour and faced with the many challenges that confront it, the European Union, in order to be a valid guarantor of the rule of law and an efficient promoter of universal values, cannot but **recognize clearly the certain existence of a stable and permanent human nature, source of common rights for all individuals**, including those who deny them. In this context, the right to conscientious objection should be protected, every time fundamental human rights are violated.

Dear friends, I know how difficult it is for Christians to defend this truth of the human person. **Nevertheless do not give in to fatigue or discouragement!** You know that it is your duty, **with God's help, to contribute to the consolidation of a new Europe which will be realistic but not cynical, rich in ideals and free from naïve illusions, inspired by the perennial and life-giving truth of the Gospel.** Therefore, **be actively present in the public debate on a European level**, knowing that this discussion is now an integral part of the national debate. And **to this commitment add effective cultural action.** Do not bend to the logic of power as an end in itself! May Christ's admonition be a constant stimulus and support for you: **"If the salt loses its flavour it is no longer good for anything**, except to be thrown out and trampled by men." (cf. *Mt.* 5:13). May the Lord make all your efforts fruitful and help you to recognize and use properly what is positive in today's civilization, while denouncing with courage all that is contrary to human dignity.