



Healing Patient Europe



The COVID-19 pandemic uncovered a crisis, or rather a set of interconnected crises: public health crisis, human rights and migration crisis, political legitimacy crisis, inequality crisis, environmental crisis. These crises are themselves rooted “in a profound crisis of values”,¹ corroding the social fabric of Europe as well as its basic solidarity with other, especially less privileged, continents and nations. What Pope John Paul II wrote twenty years ago stands even truer for Europe today, confronted with the global pandemic: “While possessed of increased resources, it [Europe] gives the impression of lacking the energy needed to sustain a common project and to give its citizens new reasons for hope”.²

During the pandemic, many decision-makers refrained from solving the crisis or even denied its very existence. This led to disastrous consequences: excessive death rates, comparable with those caused by wars; compromised health of many survivors; isolation, within families and nations, of the elderly, the poor, the less resilient and the most vulnerable. Such an approach constitutes a precedent with disastrous consequences for the near future, endangered by an exacerbated climate breakdown, the migration crisis, the lack of intergenerational solidarity and intensified competitiveness over shrinking resources.

If Europe is to survive, these crises need to be countered with a movement to build a culture of life, solidarity and healing. Healing “patient” Europe cannot be achieved with unrealistic optimism, believing that the problems will eventually solve themselves, nor with fatalism, abdicating from our responsibility to prevent them from happening. It requires a realistic confrontation with the present state of affairs – and informed solutions.

That is why the role of experts, decision-makers and leaders is to come up with effective measures which would ensure that any future pandemics are prevented and that the recovery provides a sound basis for sustainable and just development. We shall approach these fundamental, interconnected priorities in four panels.

1 John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, 108.

2 *Ibidem*.