



From the Pastor's Desk:

I would like us to reflect upon the Crucifix in the classroom to your right. It is not unlike the crucifixes in the classrooms in our school at OLPH with the exception that this crucifix is, at least for now, in a classroom in Italy. I say "at least for now" because there is an continuing debate going on in the "European Union" over a court decision banning crucifixes from all school in European classrooms, even Catholic Schools.



Right now there are 20 European nations fighting against this ruling to have it overturned. The following is an excerpt taken from - **2010-07-21 Permalink: <http://zenit.org/article-29956?l=english>**

"Last November's ruling against the display of crucifixes in Italian schools has caused the most widespread opposition in the history of the European Court of Human Rights: 20 countries are officially opposed and have joined Italy in defense of the crucifix.

The July 22 Italian edition of L'Osservatore Romano explains some reasons for this in an article written by Gregor Puppinck, director of the European Center for Law and Justice, a Strasbourg-based NGO committed to freedom of worship and thought, especially before the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and the United Nations.

Puppinck shows that opposition to the decision is not due only to political and juridical reasons, but also those of a spiritual character. 'The debate on the legitimacy of the presence of the symbol of Christ in Italian society is the emblem of a will to secularize Europe,' he warns in this interview with ZENIT, in which he reviews the arguments presented in the Vatican daily."

The issue was presented to the Court of Strasbourg by Soile Lautsi, an Italian citizen of Finnish origin, who in 2002 requested the public school "Vittorino da Feltre" in Abano Terme, Padua, in which her two children studied, to remove the crucifix from classrooms. The administration of the school refused, considering that the crucifix is part of Italian cultural patrimony. Subsequently, the Italian courts approved this argument. Before the Court of Strasbourg, Lautsi argued that the display of the crucifix in her children's classrooms was a violation of their liberty of conviction and, hence, of the right to receive a public education according to their religious convictions.

In deciding in favor of the plaintiff, the court considered that the presence of a religious symbol in the classrooms is something bad in itself, which cannot be justified. Up to that moment, on the contrary, the court had always considered that states are free in this area, that it is necessary to respect their culture and tradition, and that the only limitation that cannot be surmounted is that of subjecting pupils to indoctrination or an abusive proselytism."

I bring this to your attention as a caution which I believe we must all have when it comes to the preservation of our faith as Christians right here in our most remarkable and loved country, the USA. What is happening in Europe can happen here, and we had better not think that it could not, because in attitude toward the Catholic Church in the United States, this is exactly what newspaper and media moguls are attempting to do right in front of our eyes. Remember Europe was always the focal point of Christianity. It is from there that the Church and all of Christianity developed after moving from Jerusalem. In recent years the Catholic Faith has slipped through the fingers of the people of Europe. This has happened through the ongoing push toward "Secularism"... that none focused and liberal approach to a world where no one is free to believe the truth because there is no truth except that truth which you create or is created for you by the "legitimate" government. It is a world void of moral values except for those values that justify self-centered, egotistic and hedonistic life styles.

Fortunately, now, 21 countries are working to turn the tide which has moved toward secularism since the founding of the European Union. The Church is deeply involved in the task of returning Europe to Christ. **I quote again,** "The Council of Europe, on which the Court of Strasbourg depends, states in its founding charter "the unbreakable attachment" of the peoples of Europe to "the spiritual and moral values that make up its common patrimony." These spiritual and moral values are not of a private character, they constitute the religious identity of Europe and are recognized as founders of the European political project. As the Holy Father recalled recently, Christianity is at the origin of these spiritual and moral values. The alliance of these 21 countries indicates that it is possible to build the future of European society on this foundation, with the proviso of making a lucid reflection on the contemporary Western cultural model and on fidelity to Christ. Europe cannot face the future by renouncing Christ."

I ask you to be aware and be vigilant. This Nation was not founded on principles void of Spiritual Values from our Judeo-Christian heritage. Some of our founding Fathers may not have been the most "religious" men around at the time, but they knew what would make, and does make us a Nation free from tyranny and immersed in freedoms that would preserve and defend the life and liberty of every person declaring themselves citizens of this Great Nation. Vigilance, Courage, Honor sustained by the gracious power of God, in Christ. Defend the Faith and protect it... at all costs.

May God +bless you and yours now and forever,

Father Anthony