
Monsignor Grusas is the new CCEE president: "We are saved together: this is the message that Europe needs"

"Dialogue" and "journey". These were the first words with reference to the Church in Europe made in a press statement by the new President of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences, Msgr. **Gintaras Linas Grušas**, archbishop of Vilnius. He was elected by the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe at their plenary assembly in Rome. The two new Vice Presidents were also elected: Cardinal **Jean-Claude Hollerich**, Archbishop of Luxembourg, President of COMECE, and H.E. Monsignor **Ladislav Német**, President of the International Bishops' Conference of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Belgrade. Pope Francis "was promptly informed of the appointments and offered his best wishes to the new presidency", the CCEE made known in a statement. **The pandemic, widespread poverty, the ecological crisis.** "We should not consider these challenges as an exclusively European problem," said Msgr. Grušas. "These are global challenges that ought to be addressed in dialogue with all nations, in Europe and throughout the world." During their plenary meeting, the presidents of the Bishops' Conferences shared their views and experiences at national level. *"We discussed at length the various challenges facing Europe today, but we highlighted the journey. We emphasised the need to walk together, with the bishops, with the people and with the nations. The journey has been ongoing for the past fifty years, but there is a clear need for a new chapter."* Looking ahead, he added: "The first two years will see us engaged in the synodal process. The Pope has called on us to join the synodal process not only in our capacity as local and national churches but also as CCEE, as a continent, and jointly with the universal Church." Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, archbishop of Luxembourg, President of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union, was also elected within the new Presidency. "COMECE and CCEE will strengthen their collaboration," Msgr. Grušas pointed out, "following in the wake of the direction taken over the past five years." Card. **Jean-Claude Hollerich** mentioned the Social Days in March 2022 in Bratislava, one of next year's events promoted in conjunction with COMECE. "I welcome the collaboration between CCEE and COMECE," he said. "Poverty has dramatically spread after the pandemic. This is a challenge for the whole Church." **"We are saved together and Europe has a great need of this message."** The Bishops addressed a message to Europe on the 50th anniversary of CCEE entitled "Let us walk together." "The challenges of time – just like problems in establishing dialogues, diffidence when meeting one another, the dominant materialistic culture – challenge both the Christian faith and religion and human civilisation in general. We must not be afraid and remain united, and we – as Pastors and as citizens – walk with you whether individuals, families, populations or nations, to be the servants of your joy." "Oh you who listen to us, our voice is not powerful, but it carries the echoes of centuries; it has only one name to proclaim from rooftops everywhere, Jesus Christ. He is Europe's real hope since He is the truth and only the Truth makes us free." "The Holy Father, Pope Francis, does not cease to remind us that one is saved together and Europe has a great need of this message", reads the bishops' statement. "None fears Jesus' Gospel; it speaks to us of humankind and of God, the Guarantor of human dignity, it reminds us that no one is alone nor should they be, that the weakest must have preferential treatment. It reminds us that there is no freedom or progress without others, because each of us is an asset for everyone: people, families and states." *"Together with you we raise our eyes and look forward, far away into the distance so as not to lose our way and not to stop in the meanders of history. Together one sees better and one walks humbly towards horizons of light and peace".*