

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
TO THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
IN ITALY FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE 60th ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
TREATY OF ROME**

*Sala Regia*

24 March 2017

[Link](#)

[...] In our multicultural world, these values will continue to have their rightful place provided they maintain a vital connection to their deepest roots. The fruitfulness of that connection will make it possible to build authentically “lay” societies, free of ideological conflicts, with equal room for the native and the immigrant, for believers and nonbelievers. [...]

There is the economic crisis that has marked the past decade; there is the crisis of the family and of established social models; there is a widespread “crisis of institutions” and the migration crisis. So many crises that engender fear and profound confusion in our contemporaries, who look for a new way of envisioning the future. Yet the term “crisis” is not necessarily negative. It does not simply indicate a painful moment to be endured. The word “crisis” has its origin in the Greek verb *kríno*, which means to discern, to weigh, to assess. Ours is a time of discernment, one that invites us to determine what is essential and to build on it. It is a time of challenge and opportunity.

[...] Openness to the world implies the capacity for “dialogue as a form of encounter”<sup>[18]</sup> on all levels, beginning with dialogue between member states, between institutions and citizens, and with the numerous immigrants landing on the shores of the Union. It is not enough to handle the grave crisis of immigration of recent years as if it were a mere numerical or economic problem, or a question of security. The immigration issue poses a deeper question, one that is primarily cultural. What kind of culture does Europe propose today? The fearfulness that is becoming more and more evident has its root cause in the loss of ideals. Without an approach inspired by those ideals, we end up dominated by the fear that others will wrench us from our usual habits, deprive us of familiar comforts, and somehow call into question a lifestyle that all too often consists of material prosperity alone. Yet the richness of Europe has always been her spiritual openness and her capacity to raise basic questions about the meaning of life. [...]