

# origins

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## Acceptance Speech for Charlemagne Prize

Pope Francis

As Europe faces an unprecedented influx of migrants and refugees while struggling to counter continued economic woes, Pope Francis urged the continent to step up to its responsibilities with renewed hope, not cover behind walls and treaties. The pope — a South American son of Italian immigrants — evoked U.S. civil rights leader the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., telling European heads of state and top-level representatives that he had a dream of a divisive Europe coming together to protect the rights of everyone, especially families and migrants. “I dream of a Europe where being a migrant is not a crime but a summons to greater commit-

*“I dream of a Europe of which it will not be said that its commitment to human rights was its last utopia.”*

ment” to help those in need and, he said, “I dream of a Europe where young people can lead a simple life and see that marriage and children are a joy, not a burden because there are no stable, well-paying jobs. The pope’s dream of a rejuvenated and united Europe came as he received the prestigious Charlemagne Prize May 6 in the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican. The award is presented every year to honor a public figure for his or her commitment in promoting European unity. “What has happened to you?” the pope repeated three times. What has happened, he asked, to the glorious Europe of the past: the champion of human rights, the home of artists, the mother of heroes who upheld “and even sacrificed their lives for the dignity of their brothers and sisters?” The pope spoke in Italian; a Vatican translation of his speech follows, copyright © 2016 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

offer you a cordial welcome and I thank you for your presence. I am particularly grateful to Marcel Philipp, Jürgen Linden, Martin Schulz, Jean-Claude Juncker and Donald Tusk for their kind words. I would like to reiterate my intention to offer this prestigious award for Europe. For ours is not so much a celebration as a moment to express our shared hope for a new and courageous step forward for this beloved continent.

Creativity, genius and a capacity for rebirth and renewal are part of the soul of Europe. In the last century, Europe bore

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