

# origins

CNS documentary service

## Speech to COMECE Plenary Assembly Cardinal Parolin

In a speech to the plenary assembly of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union, known as COMECE, the Vatican secretary of state said that in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, "the church in Europe is called to carry out her mission more zealously and to make her contribution by offering a message of faith, unity, solidarity and hope to this 'old' continent of ours that we love so much." As a second wave of the pandemic hit Europe in the fall, the commission held its assembly virtually. Cardinal Pietro Parolin spoke to the commission Oct. 28 as it celebrated its 40th anniversary. The previous day the Vatican released a letter by Pope Francis to Cardinal Parolin on the commission's anniversary and

*"The virus forces us to rediscover that there is no such thing as a 'solitary' life."*

the 50th anniversaries of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the EU, and of the presence of the Holy See as a permanent observer at the Council of Europe (see *Origins*, Vol. 50, No. 24). Cardinal Parolin discussed the pope's letter, noting that "the church's closeness to Europe has become even more intense with Pope Francis, the first non-European pope in more than a thousand years." The cardinal discussed the role of COMECE as well as that of the Council of Episcopal Conferences of Europe (CCEE): "CCEE and COMECE are called, each in its own way — the former with a more pastoral profile, the second more interested in the political and legislative processes of the EU — to work closely and in full harmony for the good of the church and the whole of Europe." Cardinal Parolin's speech follows.

I am delighted that I can take part in your plenary assembly, which is taking place on the special occasion of the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE). I am particularly grateful to the president, Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, for his cordial invitation which, despite the pandemic, has at last been able to come to fruition, even if only virtually.

I also greet every one of you and the bishops' conferences you represent, as well as the secretary general, Father Manuel Barrios Prieto, and the whole COMECE secretariat, whom I thank for the valued work you do.

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