



To all men and women religious in Europe

1. We, members of 37 national Conferences of men and women religious in Europe (UCESM), gathered in Czestochowa to reflect on the theme “Religious Life in Europe: stories of hope, hope for history”.
2. We had a strong experience of communion and presence of the Lord by visiting the extermination camp in Auschwitz and by visiting places of Christian roots in Krakow and of deep spirituality at the sanctuary of our Lady of Jasna Gora and the sanctuary of the Divine Mercy in Poland.
3. ***Religious Life in Europe, do not be afraid!*** – this is the word we have heard. – *Continue to be a witness of hope for men and women of our time. Be yourself the hope of today and tomorrow as many martyrs and witnesses like Edith Stein and Maximilian Kolbe were in their times. Have the courage to sing of life together with the Lamb who seems to be dead but who is alive and stands (Rev 5:6) at the heart of our history in every time and every human life.*
4. We live in a time when men and women often search for happiness without God...and find weariness, boredom and lack of meaning. We too can be tempted of losing the passion of hope. But every day brings much hope when we recognize deep down in our brothers and sisters’ desires a deep need of spirituality and a longing for transcendence. Who will be able to satisfy this hunger and this thirst?
5. Religious Life, gift of God to the Church and to the world, has always been, throughout history, opening paths of hope: giving our hearts and hands to God and our neighbours.
This is our mission today. May our communities be homes open to all, places of prayer, activity and fraternal communion reflecting the light that comes from the source of our hope, Jesus Christ who died and is risen for us all.
6. We are challenged to actively take part in the transforming processes our continent is going through. The action of the Holy Spirit will give us determination and courage to carry in Europe hope for the future. Together with Mary we want to live listening to the Word and welcoming the Spirit so as to take part in the *missio Dei* and to be in dialogue with everyone.
7. Brothers and Sisters, joyful for having lived this experience of the favourable time, let us go back home and say: “Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!”
Let our hope be clear and strong for the One who has called us to this form of life says: “Yes, I am coming soon”! (cfr. Rev 22)