

Editorial

'His Ideas Are Efficient to This Day'

Pope John Paul II sent, on May 15 to a special Mass at the Cathedral of Trier in Germany, a call to remember and imitate the life and work of the great Cardinal and launcher of the 15th-Century Renaissance, Nikolaus von Kues (Nicolaus of Cusa). The Pope, fighting in his old age and frailty for the dignity of human life, against globalization, international usury, and genocidal war, took the time and thought personally to honor the 600th anniversary of the birth of Kues. He did not ask a church expert to read a paper. Rather, he showed that he, himself, is a passionate expert in the ideas of the great Cardinal and scientist.

Nikolaus von Kues was born into a Dark Age of usury, plague, and war, and battled not to adapt to the spirit of the time, but to develop the principles of humanity necessary to give birth to the Renaissance. The ideas of Kues, affirmed the Pope, are efficient up to this day.

John Paul II discussed those powerful ideas of Nikolaus, which have lived in full force for six centuries, in many areas without which modern physical science, and modern European civilization, would not have arisen from the 14th-Century dark age and the Black Death. The Pope cited astronomy, mathematics, natural sciences, medicine, geography, law, and philosophy. Nikolaus von Kues was, indeed, one of those "dead European white males" without whose fruitful discoveries, the worldwide growth of potential population density of the last 500 years would not have occurred, and most of the billions born during this past century would never have lived.

The Pope chose to emphasize Nikolaus von Kues' role in preparing one of the great events which launched the Renaissance: the Union Council of Florence of 1438-39. There the unifying idea was fought for, successfully, that God's grace comes also through the Son of man, and thus that every human being may radiate the spark of divine genius of the Creator. Building the inalienable rights of each human being, the Renaissance was able to create the principle of the common good, the general welfare, as the basis for the

existence of nations and their governments. Pope John Paul stressed that Nikolaus led a small team which went to Constantinople and brought back the Greek delegation to the Council, to unify the Christian churches on this idea of God and man. In addition, they brought back writings of the Greek Classic, especially those of Plato, which had been lost or neglected in the West.

Also during his trip to Greece and Syria in May, John Paul II had stressed that the Christian faith was based and grew on the ideas expressed, for Greek Classical civilization, by Plato. Nikolaus von Kues was a thorough student of Plato, and of those founding Christian works which are most clearly Platonist.

Born into a dark age, Nikolaus von Kues began a scientific and cultural Renaissance. The Pope pointed to his ideas, as having a message for all those who now ask, as St. Peter did, "What should we do?"

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute and initiator of the Call for a New Bretton Woods monetary system, has for many years passionately sought to spread the ideas of Nikolaus von Kues, to those who wish to know, "What should we do?" At Bad Schwalbach, Germany on May 5, a few weeks before the Pope's message came, she gave an address on Nikolaus to a gathering which included representatives and leaders of 40 nations. Her idea, and John Paul's, have the same human basis, as she expressed it:

"The reason why this particular man is so extraordinarily important, is because it was his ideas which gave the beautiful Italian Florence Golden Renaissance ever more and higher expressions, because he was the towering genius among all the many geniuses which came together at that point. And it was this unbelievable, fantastic explosion of human creativity expressed in this Renaissance, which did overcome the dark age of the 14th Century. And it is more urgent today, than ever before, to study the example of the Golden Renaissance, to find the clues, to find the ways how we can overcome our present dark age."