

Canopy of Prayer

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contributor

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Dear praying friends in Europe

Summaries normally contain the truth of a speech in a nut shell. So when Jesus says (Mark 12,31): "There is no other commandment greater than these," the question is: "Which are these commandments?" Jesus answered (v 29): "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart... and you shall love your neighbour as yourself." Jesus doesn't criticise us for loving ourselves. But he definitely objects to an attitude which says: "ME alone!" To drop my neighbour is as pernicious as to drop my God. Jesus puts both commandments on the same level. He establishes there an everlasting rule for His Church on earth. And who is my neighbour? (Luke 10,29f) Jesus: "The one who needs your help most." Is this relevant in politics, too?

Ortwin Schweitzer

Trade Wars

For more than 70 years, there has been an international order made up of various multinational institutions which has been central for peace and prosperity - the UN, World Bank, IMF, NATO, the EU, the WTO etc.

Underpinning this order has been American leadership - either directly (NATO) or with its blessing (EU). Europeans have traditionally welcomed US leadership as broadly beneficial, and have been happy for the US to take a large share of the burden for delivering Europe's peace and prosperity.

However, President Donald Trump takes a very different approach. Unlike his predecessors, he is an unashamed American nationalist, who expresses his disdain for multilateral cooperation. President Trump is a politician of paradoxes. A man who lies more than any other leader, according to fact-checking organisations, yet who has a stellar record at keeping his campaign promises. So when Mr Trump promised to put America first, no one can be surprised at his trade policy.

Political elites are so used to looking for hidden messages in political statements that they have struggled with an American President who means exactly what he says. President Trump has held few known political beliefs in the past, but one of those few is the conviction that the US is dealt with unfairly in international trade. As a result, he withdrew the US from the Trans-Pacific Partnership with 11 other countries, and then bullied Mexico and Canada into a one-sided renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. He also refused to appoint new judges to the WTO's court that rules on trade disputes between countries, so that the entire dispute resolution system is likely to be gone by the end of next year unless US objectives are met.

Trump's method is to look for unrelated weakness that can be leveraged into getting a key objective. For Canada, Trump wanted to seize Canada's protected dairy market, and used procedures usually related to steel and aluminium to declare Canada a probable risk to US national security. Just to say that is to show how ridiculous it is, yet the Trump administration is threatening the same approach with EU car parts. Behind all this, is the US fear of the rise of China, yet instead of joining with traditional allies in Europe to defend the liberal world order where Chinese influence is relatively limited, this President is lashing out in all directions.

Trade is not an end in itself. We are called to give glory to God in all things, and our economic activity is no exception. In Romans 12, Paul exhorts believers everywhere, as far as it depends on them, to live at peace with everyone. Nations that put too much pride in their wealth and their trading power should beware, as the fate of Tyre and Babylon in the bible warn us.

Trade wars - pray for:

- **For all glory to go to the one true God**, not to individual politicians and countries who seek to make themselves great
- **A heart of humility** and service to be evident in the behaviour of President Trump in all his dealings
- **Wisdom** for all decision makers involved in trade disputes, (that a servant heart for justice will inform their thinking)
- **For God's peace**, as we live through times of increased tension.

Please also pray for:-

1. **Pray for Bulgaria:**
Where the government is trying to return to state control over all religion.
2. **President Macron:**
War is not the real danger in Europe but the disintegration of the EU.

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