



The India of Our Dreams

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The speech “I have a dream,” that Martin Luther King Jr delivered on August 28, 1963, defining moment in the American Civil Rights movement, laying out his dream for a racially reconciled nation.

On May 6, 2016, Pope Francis delivered his own “I have a dream” address, in this case dedicated to Europe, calling the continent to undergo a “memory transfusion” to avoid the mistakes of the past and to pursue a future based on “economic justice, openness to newcomers, respect for life in all its stages, and dialogue with everyone.”

“I dream of a Europe that is young, still capable of being a mother: a mother who has life because she respects life and offers hope for life,” Francis said, as he was accepting the prestigious Charlemagne Prize, given yearly to persons who have contributed to European unity.

The pope added that “with hope and without vain nostalgia, like a son who rediscovers in Mother Europe his roots of life and faith,” he dreams of a new “European humanism,” involving “a constant work of humanization” and calls for “memory, courage, [and] a sound and humane utopian vision.”

His dream for Europe, the pontiff added, is of a continent that cares for children, one that helps the poor and newcomers “seeking acceptance because they have lost everything and need shelter.”

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He further dreams of a Europe where being a migrant is “not a crime, but a summons to greater commitment on behalf of the dignity of every human being.”

His dream for Europe also includes fostering a love for honesty, beauty and simple life among the young. “I dream of a Europe that promotes and protects the rights of everyone, without neglecting its duties towards all.”

Francis ended his address saying that he dreams “of a Europe of which it will not be said that its commitment to human rights was its last utopia.”

“What has happened to you, Europe, the home of poets, philosophers, artists, musicians, and men and women of letters?” he asked. “What has happened to you, Europe, the mother of peoples and nations, the mother of great men and women who upheld, and even sacrificed their lives for, the dignity of their brothers and sisters?”

Francis also listed three “capacities” with which Europe would be able to create a “new European humanism,” that would lead to his dreamed version of Europe: The capacity to integrate, the capacity for dialogue and the capacity to generate.

An integrated version of the European people, he said, would rediscover its soul, “born of the encounter of civilizations and peoples.” The second capacity Europe should have, according to Francis, is that of dialogue, saying that peace would only be

lasting in the measure
“that we arm our
children with the
weapons of dialogue,
that we teach them to
fight the good fight of
encounter and
negotiation.”

Lastly, the capacity to
generate, with
dialogue and
openness to others,
since “no one can
remain a mere
onlooker or
bystander” in
building an integrated
and reconciled
society.

Similar to the dream
for Europe, can we
share a dream for all

the Indians, where we can draw from our inner wisdom and create a society that is egalitarian, free and respectful of each other? Can we draw from our spiritual depth and create a society of equals? Can Indians, with their natural diversity, show the world the beauty and depth of living together as brothers and sisters? Can we collectively foster India’s capacity to integrate, the capacity for dialogue and the capacity to generate. Can we expect visionaries and leaders who will unify our country and make it a place of peace, prosperity and hospitality for all, as the freedom fighters dreamt? 🌱

Can Indians, with their natural diversity, show the world the beauty and depth of living together as brothers and sisters? Can we collectively foster India’s capacity to integrate, the capacity for dialogue and the capacity to generate. Can we expect visionaries and leaders who will unify our country and make it a place of peace, prosperity and hospitality for all, as the freedom fighters dreamt?

(Modified from an article in *The Financial Chronicle*.)