
Fall of the Berlin Wall: Mgr. Overbeck (Essen), the lesson of history “is that no wall is eternal”

(from Brussels) “The message is that no wall is eternal. We may need to be patient, but we have to look at our present time in the hope that, even in history, good always wins over evil, and above all, it is freedom that wins against every wall. This is the meaning today of the fall of the Berlin Wall, which took place 34 years ago, in 1989”. On the sidelines of the Plenary Assembly of the EU Bishops taking place until tomorrow in Brussels, Mgr. Franz-Josef Overbeck, Bishop of Essen (Germany), recalled that 34 years ago on this very day, on 9 November 1989, the East German authorities announced that East Germans would be allowed to enter West Germany freely along the border of the two nations into which the country had been divided at the end of World War II. The Bishop recalled that 9 November is an important day for the Germans: on 9 November 1918, the First World War ended, while the night between 9 and 10 November 1938 is sadly remembered as the Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass – a name given by the Nazis themselves –, which marked an outbreak of anti-Semitic attacks on synagogues, shops and homes owned by the Jews. “But in 1989 – the Bishop stressed – it was freedom that won”. Unfortunately, Europe is faced with new walls today, the most worrisome being “Russia’s war against Ukraine”. According to the Bishop, it is a war between “two systems” where Ukrainians are fighting to “live in a free and democratic country, founded on the values of freedom and peace”. This is the message of 9 November today: to guarantee to all peoples that they can live “a democratic life, free for all, based on respect for the principle of equality” because “when tolerance ceases to exist, intolerance reigns, and this is the lesson that history teaches us today”.

Valentina Bombelli