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# CHAPTER ONE

## Robert Schuman: The Man

Robert Schuman (1886–1963), the ‘Father of Europe’, became a world-famous French politician because of the Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950, which gave birth to the European Union of today. Together with Jean Monnet (1888–1979), Konrad Adenauer (1876–1967) and Alcide de Gasperi (1881–1954) he uniquely shaped the European unification process. It was and is unique in history because it entailed a partial surrender of national sovereignty to a common European institution, something that had not happened before in the European history of nations.

Schuman was a man of Catholic faith from the contested border region of Lorraine. He turned out to be the right man at the right place at the right time after the Second World War to launch the Declaration that led to the European unification we know today. This chapter will explore Schuman’s personal, regional and spiritual background in order to show that those circumstances made him an especially suitable candidate to work towards European unification. This will further help to shed light on his impact on history and his crucial role in the creation of the Schuman Declaration.

### *1.1 A Man of Contested Franco-German Border Region*

*The bitter lessons of history have taught me as one who has lived on a border to distrust hasty improvisations and over-ambitious projects. But, I also learned that if an objective, a well thought over opinion based on the reality of facts and on man’s higher interest, leads us to new or even revolutionary initiatives, it is important for us to stick to them and to*

*persevere even if they go against established customs, age-old antagonism and ancient routines.*<sup>14</sup>

*Robert Schuman*

The quote above gives already an indication of the kind of man Schuman was and of the possible influence on his life of having lived in a turbulent border region. It also indicates that he is not afraid to go after a well thought through objective that can lead to revolutionary initiatives, although these go against the grain, if this does not go against the reality of facts and man's higher interest.

This subchapter starts off with a closer look at Schuman's life in Luxembourg and in the turbulent Franco-German border region to demonstrate that this most likely contributed to him being in favour of European integration and to him playing a crucial role in the architecture of the Schuman Declaration.

Schuman was born with the name Jean-Baptiste Nicholas Robert Schuman in Clausen, a suburb of the city of Luxembourg on 29 June 1886. His father, Jean-Pierre Schuman (1837–1900), was from Lorraine and French by birth. Lorraine, however, became German territory after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870–71 and his father was forced to change his nationality from French to German. He was and remained, however, primarily a citizen of Lorraine. Schuman's mother, Eugénie Duren (1864–1911), was from Luxembourg. She changed her nationality to German after her marriage to Jean-Pierre Schuman.

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14. Schuman, *For Europe*, 12. "Les dures leçons de l'histoire ont appris à l'homme de la frontière que je suis à se méfier des improvisations hâtives, des projets trop ambitieux, mais elles m'ont appris également que lorsqu'un jugement objectif, mûrement réfléchi, basé sur la réalité des faits et l'intérêt supérieur des hommes, nous conduit à des initiatives nouvelles, voire révolutionnaires, il importe - même si elles heurtent les coutumes établies, les antagonismes séculaires et les routines anciennes- de nous y tenir fermement et de persévérer." Schuman, *Pour l'Europe*, 19. Schuman's observation needs to be placed in its context and interpreted from his Christian perspective.

Robert Schuman was thus born a German citizen. He was an only child. He grew up in a cultural environment dominated by Luxembourg. Luxembourg experienced strong influence from both Germany and France, and because of this Schuman became familiar with the mingling of different national mentalities with a common European cultural heritage. He was educated trilingually. He learned to speak Luxembourgish, French and German:

[Schuman] lives in an environment where the Roman and Germanic culture are distinguished from each other, fight each other, ignore each other, but where they also encounter each other, come together and enrich each other. He is one of those who know to unite them and to take the best of each.<sup>15</sup>

His familiarity with different cultures and languages turned out to be an important asset to his future career and made that he himself experienced what can be called a European integration on a miniature scale. After secondary school in the city of Luxembourg, he decided to study law in Germany. He obtained his doctorate summa cum laude in German civil law in Strasbourg, the capital of Alsace, on 26 February 1910. He took his final qualifying exam for starting his own lawyer's office in the spring of 1912. He settled as a lawyer in Metz, the capital of Lorraine, where he soon became very successful. Luxembourg, Germany and the region of Alsace-Lorraine, which was returned to France after the First World War, thus played an important part in Schuman's education. He became familiar with the interests and problems of these countries and learned to appreciate their differences and similarities.

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15. My translation from the original French text. From here on indicated as (mt). François Roth, *Robert Schuman: du Lorrain des frontières au père de L'Europe*, (Paris: Fayard, 2008), 10 "Il vit dans un espace où culture romane et culture germanique se distinguent, se combattent, s'ignorent, mais parfois aussi se rencontrent, s'associent et se fécondent. Il est de ceux qui savent les unir et en tirer le meilleur."

A significant part of his family lived in Lorraine, a region to which not only his father but also he himself felt very much attached. Lorraine played a fundamental role in all stages of his life. For example, he wished to do his *Arbitur* (the entrance exam that was needed before entering a German university) at the *Kaiserliches Gymnasium* in Metz and not in another German town.<sup>16</sup> Another example is the fact that he settled as a lawyer in Metz after finishing his studies.

After the First World War, when Alsace and Lorraine returned to France and its people obtained the French nationality again, Schuman's attachment to Lorraine was made official as it were when he was chosen by the people of Lorraine as their representative in the French National Assembly for the district of Thionville. This required him to become familiar with French civil law and deepen his knowledge of the interests of these regions and of the central administration. He was ordered to align the interests of Alsace-Lorraine with those of the government. This was not an easy task, as the regions did not want to lose the social rights they had acquired during the German occupancy nor the religious instruction at school, which since the law of 1905 concerning the separation of State and Church was no longer permitted in the rest of France. Schuman, however, knew how to resolve the dilemma. In 1924 he came up with the 'Lex Schuman' that contented both parties. The 'Lex Schuman' was the compilation of various laws and revisions of existing laws on many different subjects. Schuman called upon the Concordat of

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16. Rougé and Rougé, *Robert Schuman*, (Mesnil Saint-Loup: Ed. de livre ouvert, 1987), 16. Schuman said: (mt) "It's in my little Lorraine where my forefathers lived and worked for centuries where my interests are." ("C'est ma petite Lorraine où mes ancêtres ont vécu et travaillé au long des siècles. C'est là que sont mes intérêts.").

France with the Vatican of 1801 in order to retain the religious instruction in public schools.<sup>17</sup>

[The Lex Schuman] was called ‘the greatest act of legal unification attempted to then and, moreover, accomplished with the approval of the populations concerned.’ The key principles were later applied in the Convention of Human Rights and the European Community.<sup>18</sup>

Schuman never really parted from Lorraine. He bought a house in Scy-Chazelles, a village five kilometres from Metz, where he spent the latter half of his life and where he was buried in the little church opposite his house.<sup>19</sup>

It is clear that Schuman’s attachment to Lorraine had a strong influence on his concepts of regional and national identity, as he called for a protection of both during the process of European unification, as we will see when studying his thoughts about the latter in chapter three. The ‘Lex Schuman’ similarly indicates his willingness to strive towards the alignment of regional and national interests when necessary.

A closer look at the history of the region of Lorraine will help to appreciate and clarify Schuman’s input, audacity and conviction to launch the Schuman Declaration.

Lorraine is a territory that contains, as it were, most of Western European history of the past eleven centuries in a nutshell. It was, and still is, a much desired border region. Because of this, it experienced and suffered an intense history of both prosperity and war. Schuman was very much aware of this fact. The following gives an impression of the history of Lorraine so as to give some insight into its turbulent

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17. Raymond Poidevin, *Robert Schuman, homme d'état 1886 - 1963*, (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1986), 79, 102.

18. David Heilbron Price, “Human Rights and the new definition of Europe”, *Schuman Project* [www.schuman.info](http://www.schuman.info), Bron Communications 1999-2008.

19. Roth, 154.

past and into what its people experienced and to elucidate Schuman's eagerness to come to a solution of this seemingly never-ending problem of conflict.

Lorraine is a region in the north-east of France that is exceptional not only for its beautiful natural environment and other tourist attractions, but especially because it is a border region between France, Luxembourg, Belgium and Germany and therefore unique in its rich and intense history. It has been a conflict area from the time it came into being after the Treaty of Verdun (843) until the Schuman Declaration of 1950. The Treaty of Verdun divided the Frankish territory of the Holy Roman Empire, which came into being after Charlemagne's crowning as Emperor by Pope Leo III in 800, into three parts among Charlemagne's three grandsons. The Eastern part went to Charles II the Bald, the Western part to Louis the German and the Mid Frankish territory, from the North Sea to Rome, to Lothar I. Lothar I became the new Emperor. His Mid Frankish territory was soon named the land of Lotharinga, after him. But his son, Lothar II died without an heir in 869 and sovereignty over the area was repeatedly contested. Family of the rulers of the Mid, Eastern and the Western Frankish territory started to claim sovereignty and parts of the territory until it was finally conquered in 925 by the German king Henry I (876–936), who created the duchy of Lotharinga. His son, Otto I, entrusted the duchy to his brother, Bruno, archbishop of Cologne, who separated the duchy of Lotharinga into Upper and Lower Lorraine. It would be only Upper Lorraine that kept its name and became the region of Alsace-Lorraine we know today. The duchy was the object of constant strife and frequent wars because of its wealth, its natural resources of coal and iron ore and the importance of its bishoprics.

French domination goes back to the seventeenth century, when control of Lorraine became vital in the struggles between the French kings and the Habsburgs, who ruled the Holy Roman Empire since the fifteenth century.<sup>20</sup> The French had already taken the bishoprics Metz, Toul and Verdun in 1552 when fighting Charles V, the Emperor of the Habsburgs at that time. They only occupied Lorraine in its totality a century later, in 1641 during the Thirty Years War, but they had not conquered it for long. The French had to vacate the region after the Peace of Westphalia<sup>21</sup> in 1648. France, however, did not give up its wish to conquer the region. It invaded Lorraine again and stayed for thirty years. It only retreated from Lorraine after the Nine Years' War it had started, and lost, in The Netherlands. That war ended with the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697. This treaty required France to leave Lorraine. It was only in 1737, after the War of Polish Succession, that the possibility for France to once again obtain Lorraine became feasible. Then it was part of an agreement between France, the Habsburgs and the Lorraine House of Vaudémont that Lorraine would belong to France after the region had been the property of Stanislaw Leszynski, the former king of Poland and father-in-law to king Louis XV of France. Leszynski, who had been supported by France in the War of Polish Succession so as to succeed on the Polish throne, had

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20. The Habsburgs were preceded by the German kings from the first German king, Henry I, onwards.

21. See: Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 was a "general settlement ending the Thirty Years War. It marked the end of the Holy Roman Empire as an effective institution and inaugurated the modern European state system. (The Holy Roman Empire still continued but strongly weakened till 1806). The chief participants in the negotiations were the allies Sweden and France; their opponents, Spain and the Holy Roman Empire; and the various parts of the Empire together with the newly independent Netherlands. Earlier endeavours to bring about a general peace had been unsuccessful." See also: Pierre Beaudry, "The Treaty of Westphalia", The Schiller Institute, Washington DC 2003. "In the Peace of Westphalia, Mazarin's (French Cardinal) and Colbert's (his "protégé") common-good principle of the "Advantage of the other" triumphed over the imperial designs of both France's Louis XIV himself, and the Venetian-controlled Habsburg Empire."

lost out to a candidate backed by Russia and Austria. He now received Lorraine with the understanding that it would fall to the French crown after his death. Leszynski passed away in 1766 and that same year Lorraine was annexed by France and reorganized as a province by the French government. Lorraine thus experienced the effects of the French Revolution (1789), Napoleon's military dictatorship (1799–1804) and Empire (1804–1812)<sup>22</sup> and his concordat with the Holy See (1801)<sup>23</sup>.

It should be mentioned that Napoleon's concordat with the Holy See would be denounced by the French government in 1905, with the enactment of its law of separation of church and state, but this did not affect the region of Alsace-Lorraine as it belonged to Germany at the time. This explains why there was still religious instruction in this region, which had always remained faithful to Rome, even during the period of the Reformation<sup>24</sup>, after the First World War while it was prohibited in the rest of France.

Lorraine was in French possession again from Leszynski's death in 1766 onwards until the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871, when the northern parts of Lorraine surrounding Metz, along with Alsace, were conquered by Bismarck and his army. Bismarck's

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22. See also: *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Micropaedia*, Inc., Vol. VII, (Chicago: Helen Hemingway Benton Publisher, 1974), 189, 190.

23. "A concordat is a pact, with the force of international law, concluded between the ecclesiastical authority and the secular authority on matters of mutual concern; most especially a pact between the pope, as head of the Roman Catholic Church, and a temporal head of state for the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs in the territory of the latter. Matters often dealt with in concordats include: the rights and liberties of the church; the creation and suppression of dioceses and parishes; the appointment of bishops, pastors and military chaplains, sometimes with provision for their support; ecclesiastical immunities (e.g. exemption from military service); church properties; questions relating to marriage; and religious education. The Concordat of 1801 was an agreement between Napoleonic France and the papacy defining the status of the Roman Catholic Church in France and ending the breach caused by the church reforms enacted during the French Revolution." *Ibid.* Vol. III, 65.

24. Roth, 10.

victory meant the creation of a new German Empire. The conquered regions were governed as the *Reichsland Elsass-Lothringen* under a governor who was directly appointed by the German Emperor, Wilhelm I, without any parliamentary representation. It was during this period that Schuman's father had to change nationality from French to German. Alsace-Lorraine belonged to Germany until the end of the First World War when Wilhelm II abdicated and the region declared itself independent, only to be annexed by France a few days later. At that moment Schuman himself changed his nationality from German to French. Policies forbidding the use of German and requiring the use of French were introduced. Many German-speaking people left the region.

An illustrative example of the mingling of French and German occupation in Lorraine is the canonization of Jeanne d'Arc by Pope Benedict XV in 1920, two years after the region had returned to France.<sup>25</sup> The saint (1412–1431) was from Domremy, a small village in Lorraine which at that time belonged to the Habsburg's Empire. She is known, however, as one of the great saints of France as she, belonging to the Habsburg's Empire, fought for France against the English invaders. Schuman and his mother had gone to her beatification in Rome in 1909.<sup>26</sup>

During the Second World War Lorraine was occupied again by the Germans from 1940–1944. It became once more a war-torn area.<sup>27</sup> Schuman searched for a solution and encouraged a reconciliation policy. It turned out to be precisely this conflict area that Schuman

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25. Schuman belonged to the official French delegation. He had contributed to the re-establishment of the diplomatic relationship between the French parliament and the Vatican. See: Christian Pennera, *Robert Schuman: la jeunesse et les débuts politiques d'un grand européen de 1886 à 1924*. (Sarreguemines: Pierron, 1985), 193; Poidevin, *homme d'état*, 67, 99.

26. Roth, 41.

27. The largest American war cemetery in France is located in Lorraine.

envisioned as the cradle of European unification for peace and security, only a few years later.

In short, people fought a great deal over the region of Lorraine for historic reasons, rivalry and geographic location; as a border region Lorraine suffered from more inimical attacks. Besides, Lorraine was, as mentioned before, greatly desired for its important bishoprics Metz, Toul and Verdun and also, especially since the period of industrialization in the nineteenth century, for its richness in raw materials such as coal and iron ore. Those natural resources were urgently needed for the production of steel and for the war industry. Lorraine's desire to be autonomous and independent was a constant wish of many of its inhabitants, but had hardly ever turned into a reality.

The constant rivalry between France and Germany over the region meant a constant tension, threat of war, or actual war for Lorraine itself. Schuman anxiously searched for a solution to this seemingly neverending problem and had for that reason made a thorough study of the history of Alsace-Lorraine. He realized that the motive for war had often been the desire to possess Lorraine's raw materials for the steel and war industry. After the Second World War France was the ally that occupied the German region of the Saar and Ruhr adjacent to Alsace-Lorraine. This implied more tension between France and Germany. Schuman acknowledged that this tension should be ended in order to obtain a 'permanent' peace and that for this reason the French-German coal and steel problem needed to be solved. He envisioned its solution in a policy of reconciliation and cooperation followed by a process of European unification, as we will see in the following chapters, and began visiting the Saar and Ruhr

region from 1948 onwards.<sup>28</sup> The fact that Schuman had the capability and opportunity to put his plan into effect and that he was familiar with and appreciated both the French and the German culture were other important assets to incarnate his vision.

As previously mentioned, the history of Lorraine condenses as it were the history of Europe's most powerful reigns: those of the German kings followed by the Habsburg's Empire and of the French kings since the Treaty of Verdun. This peculiarity and the important role of this region in the history of European unification might partly explain why Schuman strove towards European unification, and how he envisioned this unification:

[Robert Schuman] was marked and modelled by his Luxembourgian origin, the spirit of Lorraine and of profound Catholicism. Thanks to his double, German and French, culture, something exceptional among the French politicians, he was able to approach the German problem in an original way. Loyal to both countries, he always refused to erect the nation into an absolute. This explains his tenacity in wanting to do away with national conflicts, to put the first beacons for French-German reconciliation, a process that would necessarily take a long time.<sup>29</sup>

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28. Roth, 352, 353. Poidevin, *homme d'état*, 209, 210. This observation was confirmed by David Heilbron Price, researcher and expert on Schuman, during an interview in Brussels, 6 May 2011.

29. (mt) Roth, 563. "Il était marqué par ses origines luxembourgeoises, l'esprit lotharingien et profondément catholique qui l'avait modelé. Sa double culture, allemande et française, exceptionnelle dans le personnel politique français, lui a permis une approche originale du problème allemand. Loyal à l'égard de ses deux patries successives, il a toujours refusé d'ériger la nation en absolu, d'où sa volonté tenace de dépasser les conflits nationaux, de poser les premiers jalons de la réconciliation franco-allemande, processus obligatoirement long."

## ***1.2 A Man of Faith***

Robert Schuman was a man of Catholic faith<sup>30</sup> and this imbued his entire being and therefore also his way of thinking about European unification. His faith, including belief in forgiveness and starting anew, explains to a large extent his ability to constantly strive towards a policy of reconciliation despite severe opposition and clarifies his driving force to come to a European unification that would guarantee peace and security for the European citizen and each nation. The Roman Catholic faith played a major role in Schuman's life and meant his driving force in all his proceedings. In fact his faith made that Schuman felt that he was called to work towards European unification. This translated itself into his reconciliation policy to be followed by its practical output in the Schuman Declaration of 1950. The focus will therefore be on the role of Catholic faith in Schuman's life. It will show till what extent it formed him as a person and as a professional and what it meant for his thoughts on Europe.

The Catholicity of his environment, but especially of the region of Lorraine permeated Schuman's formation and education, and made him familiar with the theories and practices of forgiveness, reconciliation as well as the universality of the Catholic faith: "The Church became the child's and adult's real spiritual home and continued to be so for his entire life."<sup>31</sup> His mother's strong Catholic faith had a lifelong impact on Robert from early childhood onwards. Schuman was known for being a practicing Catholic who as an adult

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30. Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 16 -26; René Lejeune, *Robert Schuman, Père de l'Europe* (Paris: Fayard, 2000), 37, 38, 51-58, 211; Alan P. Fimister, *Robert Schuman: Neo-Scholastic Humanism and the Reunification of Europe*, (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008), 224 -227; Pennera, 175 – 214; *Robert Schuman 1886-1963. Et les débuts de l'Europe*, (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2009), 30-38. Archives *Maison de Robert Schuman*, RS 11-14, Archives Départementales de la Moselle, 19J688.

31. (mt). Victor Conzemius, *Robert Schuman, Christ und Staatsmann*, (Hamburg: Wittig, 1985), 13. "Die Kirche wurde zur eigentlichen geistigen Heimat des Knaben und des Heranwachsenden; sie sollte es ein Leben lang bleiben."

went for daily Mass all through his life<sup>32</sup> and who took to heart the Church's teachings. During his university studies (1904–1910) he became a (lifelong) member of the Catholic Society *Unitas*.<sup>33</sup> This society, which had Thomas Aquinas as its patron saint, was founded by students of theology. It imparted Catholic doctrinal formation to all of its members. Its motto was 'unity in necessary things; liberty when there is doubt; charity in all things'<sup>34</sup>. This motto seems to characterize the European thought Schuman would promote later on as we will see when dealing with the foundations of European integration.

Schuman studied law in Bonn, Munich and Berlin. In Bonn he followed courses on the theories of state that were taught by Von Hertling<sup>35</sup>, a professor who did not make a secret of his Catholic faith, but used it openly in his lectures on philosophy of law, state and society. Although Schuman appreciated these lectures, he decided to continue his studies in Munich and Berlin so as to be able to follow courses focused not only on man and society, but also on economics and finance. As mentioned in the previous section, Schuman obtained his doctorate *summa cum laude* in German civil law in Strasbourg in 1910.

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32. *Ibid.*, 26, 40; and Poidevin, *homme d'état*, 18.

33. See also: Pennera, 33; Conzemius, 21; Poidevin, *homme d'état*, 16.

34. (mt). "In necesariis unitas, in dubio libertas, in omnibus caritas." See also: [www.robert-schuman.com](http://www.robert-schuman.com), *Le jeune homme engagé*.

35. Georg von Hertling (1843–1919), statesman and philosopher, exercised considerable influence on Catholic social philosophy from his university chairs at Bonn and then Munich. He was Head of the *Görres-Gesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaft im katholischen Deutschland* from the beginning of its foundation (1876) till his death on 4 January 1919. He served in the Reichstag (federal parliament) as a deputy of the Catholic Centre Party (1875–90 and 1896–1912) and was its parliamentary leader from 1909 to 1912. From 1912 till 1917 he was the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bavaria. He was Chancellor of the German Empire from 1917 – 1918. See also: *Encyclopaedia Britannica. Micropaedia, Inc.*, Vol. V (Chicago: Helen Hemingway Benton Publisher, 1974) 11-12. The *Görres-Gesellschaft* was named after Johann Joseph von Görres, a historian and publisher of the first half of the nineteenth century, who dedicated most of his works to the study of the relationship between Church and State.

That same year (1910) he became a (lifelong) member of the *Görres-Gesellschaft*, a union that wanted Catholicism to have its place in politics and in the scientific world.<sup>36</sup> It was founded in 1876 by a group of scholars and publishers under Von Hertling's leadership to foster research while taking the Christian tradition and Catholic faith into account. Schuman worked on a study of international law based on Christian principles for this society.<sup>37</sup> He wanted to clarify and safeguard the rights of individuals and communities in the construction of peace between nations in agreement with the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) of Leo XIII, in which the social question and the need for justice was strongly emphasized.

This society might well have been a reaction against the *Kulturkampf* as initiated by Bismarck, the first German Chancellor, immediately after the Franco-Prussian war. The widespread belief that the German unification movement was a victory of the Protestant state over Catholic interests led to a reaction from the Catholic side and to a profound renewal of the Catholic Church in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century. A new liturgical movement came into being through the interaction between the Abbey of Maria Laach, where Schuman used to go, and Catholic intellectuals. The movement was organized by Theodor Abele (1879–1965), theologian and philosopher, and Hermann Platz (1880–1945), humanist and

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36. Pennera, 37; Conzemius, 31; Poidevin, *homme d'état*, 29.

37. Schuman went as a joint leader of the German delegation to the conference of the *Union for the Study of international Law according to Christian Principles*, at the Leuven University in Belgium in October 1912. The conference was presided by Belgian lawyer Baron Deschamps, who later drafted the statutes of the Permanent Court of International Justice, and in 1920 suggested the creation of an International Criminal Court. Schuman, as a permanent representative of the Union, later reported on a workplan to the Law section of the learned *Görres-Gesellschaft*. See: [www.schuman.info](http://www.schuman.info), *Human Rights and the new definition of Europe*. See also: Pennera, 39; Angeles Muñoz, "L'engagement européen de Robert Schuman" in: *Robert Schuman et Pères de l'Europe*, (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008), 41.

philosopher of culture. They counted Schuman among their acquaintances.<sup>38</sup>

Schuman lost his father when he was 14 years old and his mother when he was 25 in 1911. Her death made a great impact on him and made him question which goal to pursue in life, whether it was the priesthood or a layman's career in law. That same year a friend from Strasbourg, Henri Eschbach, made an observation that made a lifelong impression on Schuman. He commented that the saints of the future, will be 'saints in suits'<sup>39</sup>. Eschbach encouraged him to go for the lay-apostolate. According to him Schuman should help to change the world from within and make it a better place to live, as this would suit him perfectly. "I cannot imagine a better apostle than you [...] you should remain a lay person because you will then succeed better in doing good, which is your sole preoccupation."<sup>40</sup> This observation touched Schuman profoundly. He decided to take his Catholic faith even more seriously, as a professional too, and so heed his call to sanctity in the middle of the world. Familiar with the teachings of the Church and thus with the encyclicals<sup>41</sup> of the Popes, he took to heart the words expressed by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879) "if men be of sound mind and take their stand on true and solid principles, there will result a vast amount of benefits for the public and the private good."<sup>42</sup> The idea of the layman's call to holiness in the middle of the world

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38. George E. Griener, "Herman Schell and the reform of the Catholic Church in Germany," *Theological Studies* 54 (1993) 1-3. See also: Poidevin, *homme d'état*, 32.

39. (mt) Robert Rochefort, *Robert Schuman*, (Paris: Cerf, 1968), 44. 'saints en veston'.

40. Eschbach in: Pennera, 31; Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 16; Fimister, , 148. See also: Archives départementales de la Moselle 34 J1. Henri Eschbach: "Je ne puis imaginer meilleur apôtre que toi; tu resteras laïque parce que tu réussiras mieux faire le bien, ce qui est ton unique préoccupation."

41. An encyclical letter of the Roman Catholic Church is an important document written by the pope on issues concerning faith, morality, or both.

42. Leo XIII, encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris*, Rome 1879, n. 2.

was also expressed in Leo XIII's encyclical *Divinum illud* (1897) with the words:

[E]very Christian ought to shine with the splendour of virtue so as to be pleasing to so great and so beneficent a guest (the Holy Spirit); and first of all with chastity and holiness, for chaste and holy things befit the temple. Hence the words of the Apostle: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"<sup>43</sup>

Consequently, Schuman decided to pursue his career as a lawyer in Metz, Lorraine - at that time (1912) part of Germany. He soon became a highly appreciated lawyer because of his strong defence of justice. Schuman also became well known in Catholic circles in which he spoke about the importance of education and formation for the lay apostolate. He stressed the need to take care of the education of abandoned youth.<sup>44</sup> Schuman became a member of the *Caritasverbandes* of Lorraine and of the *Bureau de bienfaisance*. The newspaper *Le Lorrain* commented favourably on his generosity towards the needy and on his profound thoughts on education.<sup>45</sup>

Bishop Benzler of Metz entrusted to him as a layman the responsibility for the youth organizations in Metz.<sup>46</sup> Schuman thus stood at the head of the Diocesan Federation of Youth Groups (*Fédération diocésaine des Groupements de Jeunesse; FDGJ*). He got to know the leaders of these youth groups, counting a total of 4,000

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43. Leo XIII, encyclical letter *Divinum illud*, Rome 1897, n. 10.

44. In *Journal de 60<sup>e</sup> Congrès Général des Catholiques d'Allemagne*, 19 August 1913, Archives départementales de la Moselle I9J660, Metz.

45. Lejeune, 51. "M. Schuman, depuis si peu de temps à Metz, y est déjà connu avantageusement. La part qu'il prend à toutes les manifestations catholiques ainsi que son dévouement sans bornes aux oeuvres de bienfaisance ont fait de lui l'un des hommes les plus aimés et déjà un chef respecté et écouté. Ce fut encore le cas aujourd'hui: son discours écouté avec beaucoup d'intérêt était d'une profondeur de pensée et d'une élévation de sentiments qui font honneur au jeune orateur." See also: Conzemius, 28; Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 32.

46. Schuman got to know Benzler at the *Katholikentag* in Strasbourg in 1905 when the latter spoke about the importance of the mission of the lay people within the Church. He did so right after the announcement made in France about the laicist regime. See: Pennera, 40.

young members from Lorraine, engaged in the local life of the Church.

In August 1913 Schuman was the second secretary of the *Katholikentag* in Metz.<sup>47</sup> The *Katholikentag* was celebrated every two years and brought together tens of thousands of Catholics of all ages heading associations or groups organized around their local bishops from all over Germany. The social doctrine of the Catholic Church was emphasized. Schuman gave a speech in which he stressed the need for the intellectual formation of the people so as to fight the immense egoism that dominated society and to prevent the poor people from falling into despair and radicalism. He called for a thorough education from childhood onwards and emphasized a Christian's responsibility to live a Christian life and take care of his religious formation through reading clubs or other kinds of intellectual circles. He mentioned the need to adopt necessary reforms, but not those that were the product of simple ideologies. He regarded this formation and the need to help others to acquire the necessary information as a task of all people present as all were called to be apostles.<sup>48</sup> All this kind of activities, however, stopped with the outbreak of the First World War.

Schuman's decision to follow his vocation as a layperson deeply influenced all areas of his life. It precipitated not only Schuman's first steps in public life but also a time of recollections in Maria Laach.<sup>49</sup> It was in Maria Laach where Schuman got to know, shared ideas and became friends with well-known intellectuals of the

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47. See also: Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 33.

48. See: Schuman Speech in Supplement of weekly journal *La Croix de Lorraine*. A report of the assembly of the *Union Populaire Catholique Lorraine* (Catholic People's Union from Lorraine) and Schuman's speech at the *Katholikentag*, 19 August 1913. See also: Lejeune, *Robert Schuman*, 57.

49. Bishop Benzler had been the Abbot of Maria Laach before becoming the Bishop of Metz. A recollection is a period of prayer and meditation.

day such as Jacques Maritain and Romano Guardini with whom he exchanged ideas and shared a common faith in Catholicism.<sup>50</sup> He participated as well, as mentioned before, in the Catholic circles organized by Theodor Abele and Hermann Platz. Many years later, as President of the European Parliament, he wrote that it was in Maria Laach that he began to realise that everything that provides understanding, unity and fraternity comes from the same source. In this regard his visits to Maria Laach were a cornerstone of the awakening Europe.<sup>51</sup>

Bishop Benzler suggested Schuman to study Thomism thoroughly. Thomas Aquinas was a philosopher and theologian strongly recommended by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* of 1879 for providing deep philosophical insights on which “a right interpretation of the other sciences in great part depends.”<sup>52</sup> Schuman’s biographer René Lejeune states that Schuman “never ceased to [study Thomas Aquinas] until the end of his life [...] he mastered Thomism to the point where he could debate in Latin with specialists.”<sup>53</sup>

Political historians George Sabine and Thomas Thorson provide a general idea of Aquinas’s philosophy on nature and society, two of Schuman’s main topics of interest. In this philosophy, the emphasis is laid on a universal synthesis in which all elements come together and in which reason and faith serve as complementary guides:

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50. Charles van Leeuwen, “Een pelgrim voor Europa,” 2005. Rochefort mentions that he, Rochefort, Schuman’s ‘Chef de Cabinet’, and Guardini were invited for dinner during ‘la Semaine des intellectuels catholiques’ by Robert Schuman, then Prime-Minister, in Paris in April 1948. Rochefort, *Dans le Clair-obscur du monde*, (Paris, Nouvelle librairie de France, 1996), p. 94.

51. Conzemius, 28.

52. Leo XIII, encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris*, Rome 1879, n. 1.

53. Lejeune, *Robert Schuman*, 55. The influence of Thomism on Schuman was studied by Alan P. Fimister. He obtained his PhD in the political Thomism of Robert Schuman at the University of Aberdeen in 2007.

It was of the essence of Thomas's philosophy that it essayed a universal synthesis, an all-embracing system, the keynote of which was harmony and conciliation [...] The whole of human knowledge forms a single piece. Broadest in extent, but least highly generalized are the particular sciences each with its special subject-matter; above these is philosophy, a rational discipline which seeks to formulate the universal principles of all the sciences; above reason and depending upon divine revelation is Christian theology, the consummation of the whole system. But though revelation is above reason, it is in no way contrary to reason; theology completes the system of which science and philosophy form the beginning, but never destroys its continuity. Faith is the fulfilment of reason. Together they build the temple of knowledge but nowhere do they conflict or work at cross purposes.<sup>54</sup>

Aquinas saw a hierarchy in nature with God at the top. The purpose of each creature is to become what it is meant to be under the internal urge of its nature. This implies the creature's subordination to an end. Man is unique in that next to a body he also has a rational and spiritual soul. The institutions and the laws by which man's life is directed are founded on this fundamental aspect of man.

The picture which Thomas drew of nature conformed exactly to his plan of knowledge. The universe forms a hierarchy reaching from God at its summit down to the lowest being. Every being acts under the internal urge of its own nature, seeking the good or form of perfection natural to its kind, and finding its place in the ascending order according to its degree of perfection. The highest in all cases rules over and makes use of the lower, as God rules over the world or the soul over the body. No matter how lowly it may be, no being is wholly lacking in value, for it has its station, its duties and its rights, through which it contributes to the perfection of the whole. The essence of the scheme is purpose, subordination to an end. In such a structure human nature has a unique place among created beings, since man possesses not only a bodily nature but also a rational and spiritual soul by virtue of which he is akin to God. He alone of all beings is at once body and soul,

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54. George H. Sabine and Thomas L. Thorson, *A history of political theory*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, (Hinsdale, IL: Dryden Press, 1973), 236, 237.

and on this fundamental fact rest the institutions and the laws by which his life is directed.<sup>55</sup>

Through his study of Thomism Schuman consolidated his own philosophy of nature, man and morality and their synthesis. He highly appreciated Aquinas's dialectic instrument, a method for a thorough analysis of reality that is able to distinguish contrastive elements and to subsequently bring them together through the dialectic of conciliation and reconciliation.<sup>56</sup> This way of thinking perfectly suited Schuman's constant striving for peace and harmony amongst peoples and nations. The influence of Thomism was evident in Schuman's earlier research on issues of international law for the *Görres-Gesellschaft* before the First World War. After the war this influence showed itself even more clearly in Schuman's efforts to come to a conciliatory legislation between Alsace-Lorraine and the central government. His reconciliation policy regarding Germany after the Second World War as both Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs can be considered an outstanding example of Aquinas's dialectic of reconciliation.

Schuman, who right after the First World War<sup>57</sup> had become a member of the local council of Metz, was elected by the people of Lorraine with a large majority to be their representative of the *Union Républicaine de Lorraine (URL)*<sup>58</sup> in the French Parliament. The URL was a Catholic party to whose programme Schuman had also

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55. Ibid.

56. See: Lejeune, *Robert Schuman*, 55.

57. During the First World War Schuman worked as a civil servant in Boulay registering conquered materials. The war had a great impact on him as he saw family of his from Belgium, France and Germany fighting each other. Although he tried to be impartial, he inwardly took side against the Germans. Yet he never ceased to look for peace. See: Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 35.

58. The URL was a combination of three Catholic parties that had fallen apart. See: Conzemius, 34.

contributed.<sup>59</sup> Although Schuman himself did not want to be a politician, he let himself be convinced by Father Collin of Metz to accept this new task in life as a representative of the Department of la Moselle, Metz and Thionville. Father Collin wanted Schuman to accept, knowing that he was a man of solid faith who would not be blinded by personal ambitions. “Lorraine needs you to preserve its soul” was the convincing statement that made Schuman accept. The fact that Schuman himself did not aspire to be a representative, is clearly reflected in the following letter to his cousin Albert Duren:

It’s not the ambition that leads me. [...] How much would I have preferred to dedicate myself to my profession, to the religious and social works, to my family! But there are obligations you cannot shirk back from. We didn’t have a big choice of parliamentary candidates for this legislature that will decide over our political future.<sup>60</sup>

Although Schuman did not aspire to become a politician, he did feel the urge to fight unjust practices. Being familiar with Aquinas’s theories, he also applied Pope Leo XIII’s practical advice that “[t]he State should watch over these societies of citizens [trade unions] banded together in accordance with their rights, but it should not thrust itself into their peculiar concerns and their organization, for things move and live by the spirit inspiring them, and may be killed by the rough grasp of a hand from without.”<sup>61</sup> As a politician Schuman did a great deal for the recognition of Christian trade unions. He stated that Catholics should have a right to form their trade union and added

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59. Angeles Muñoz, “L’engagement européen de Robert Schuman” in: *Robert Schuman et les Pères de l’Europe*, (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008), 42.

60. (mt) Schuman, letter to his cousin Albert Duren, 10 August 1920. See: Lejeune, *Robert Schuman*, 66. “Ce n’est pas l’ambition qui me guide [...]. Combien aurais-je préféré me consacrer à ma profession, aux œuvres religieuses et sociales, à ma famille! Mais il y a des devoirs auxquels on ne peut se dérober. Nous n’avions pas grand-choix de candidats parlementaires pour cette législature qui décidera de notre avenir politique.”

61. Leo XIII, encyclical letter *Rerum Novarum*, Rome 1891, n. 55.

that Catholicism did not only imply a religious faith but also a social doctrine.<sup>62</sup> In this way he took to heart the teachings of Leo XIII.

A decade later Pope Pius XI, whose encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* of 1931 elaborated on the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* – *On the Condition of Workers* on the occasion of its 40th anniversary, would stress the impact of his predecessor's encyclical with the following words:

[H]is Encyclical [*Rerum Novarum*] [...] had this special distinction that at a time when it was most opportune and actually necessary to do so, it laid down for all mankind the surest rules to solve aright that difficult problem of human relations called 'the social question'.

[He] declared and proclaimed "the rights and duties within which the rich and the proletariat - those who furnish material things and those who furnish work - ought to be restricted in relation to each other," and what the Church, heads of States and the people themselves directly concerned ought to do.<sup>63</sup>

Schuman's concern over justice and his faith turned out to be driving forces during his entire life as they gave him the spiritual input that was needed to make breakthroughs such as the Schuman Declaration possible as we will see in chapter three. By putting his faith into (political) practice, he felt himself to be a true lay-apostle.<sup>64</sup>

The years of the interwar period (1919–1939) were decisive for his political education. He remained in parliament, as he was re-elected by the people of Lorraine until the end of the Third Republic in 1939.<sup>65</sup> His motto in politics was and would always be to serve and not to be served. The 'Lex Schuman', which halted the introduction of

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62. Schuman quoted in Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 24, 166.

63. Pius XI, encyclical letter *Quadragesimo Anno*, Rome 1931, nn. 2 and 11.

64. See also: Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 13; Pennera, 179. Pennera also quotes in this regard politician Georges Bidault's saying that serving the country and fellow-men can be considered a tangible expression of practical apostolate.

65. See: Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 41–52.

the full range of republican legislation in the district of Thionville, had not been an easy feat, as explained in the previous section. His faith turned out to play an important role in the alignment of interests between the central administration and Lorraine. Robert Rochefort quotes Schuman in his biography of Schuman, saying:

Beware those who charm you to sleep. Beware those who would lull you into a false sense of security. Beware the purveyors of empty reassurances on these measures. They seek to introduce by stages and bit by bit that which the soul of the people of Lorraine rejects. The final end is clear. They seek to extinguish the religious life in the country and in the people. For the love of our children, we would prevent what will follow. It is not from a spirit of contradiction that we take the position we do today, but because we cannot betray the soul of our people.<sup>66</sup>

During the interwar period Schuman gave a number of speeches to the Congress of Catholic Lawyers on constitutional subjects. Those speeches clearly reflect Schuman's concern about the lack of morality in the French state and its citizens. As Alan Fimister mentions in his book *Robert Schuman: Neo-Scholastic Humanism and the Reunification of Europe*:

Schuman believed that constitutional instability was sapping the vitality of France, and that even the imperfect institutions with which they were endowed were hampered by a moral crisis in France caused by the war. The collapse of public and private morality in France was "a hideous gangrene" on the "body social." This had caused the "crisis in parliamentary government, the impotence of our laws to prevent the pillage of savings and shameful profiteering, the confusion of the powers and the incessant trespass of private interest upon the common good, all of which proceeds in the last analysis from one principal cause: the appalling unchaining of egotisms cynically flaunted or prudently masked but benefitting from the protection of powerful hidden interests. Man's fallibility and weakness demand the state and its coercive power. But the very best constitutional texts do not guarantee the healthy

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66. Rochefort, *Robert Schuman*, (Paris: Cerf, 1968), 70.

working of society without morals. Deeply concerned at incursions of the legislature upon the juridical power, Schuman was determined that the powers should be separated and justice should be swift. A new constitutional touch-stone is required.<sup>67</sup>

Fimister continues explicating Schuman's strong connection with the Catholic Church when he writes that Schuman agreed with the Church's position that it were essential for a government that the positive law be consistent with natural law:

Schuman's political choices at the end of the 1930s showed that he adhered closely to the Church's position on the form of civil government. Any form which was capable of yielding positive law compatible with natural law was acceptable in itself. The question of what is, all other things being equal, the best form of government is a question capable of being answered, but the magisterium disdains to answer it, leaving it to the private judgement of the laity. Schuman's own judgement led him to Christian Democracy but he was not willing to sacrifice Christianity for the sake of democracy nor did he think it was necessarily the highest temporal good either. Human rights and the rule of law were more important than regular elections, albeit that the latter were usually the best way of preserving the former.<sup>68</sup>

Schuman's stress on human rights and rule of law was also reflected in his professional attitude, accuracy and feeling for justice in the world of finance. He was already regarded as one of the top experts in national and international finance in the 1930s. He helped to provide a loan to sustain Austria against Nazism, which he considered to be an anti-moral and dangerous ideology.<sup>69</sup>

Schuman's wish to pertain to the political party that were most consistent with his thoughts made him switch political parties in 1931.

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67. Schuman quoted in: Alan P. Fimister, *Robert Schuman: Neo-Scholastic Humanism and the Reunification of Europe*, (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008), 159. See also: Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 92. Robert Schuman, "L'irresponsabilité des hommes politiques" in: *Revue Catholique des institutions et du droit*, (Lyon, 1935), 6-19.

68. Fimister, 160.

69. "Schuman biography: chronology", *The Schuman project*, Brussels 2004. See also: [www.schuman.info](http://www.schuman.info)

He left the URL and became a member of the *Parti Démocrate Populaire (PDP)*,<sup>70</sup> the Christian national democratic People's Party more in line with the peace-building policies he had in mind. Schuman spoke outside the Parliament on various occasions about the Church's need for freedom to exercise her role as educator.<sup>71</sup> He also pleaded for the abolishment of the intolerant prohibition of the assembling of congregations or in general of Catholics having religious meetings in public places.<sup>72</sup> Schuman's apostolic zeal was clear and unimpeded by the environment of laicism that surrounded him.<sup>73</sup>

Schuman's faith was deepened by his pious life, Thomism and activities in Catholic circles and equally encouraged to manifest itself through concrete deeds. The latter expressed itself for instance already before the First World War in his research for the *Görres-Gesellschaft* that concerned a peace project based on international law and was grounded on Christian principles. His faith furthermore manifested itself after the First World War in the 'Lex Schuman' that combined the interests of the central government with the particular social and religious interests of Alsace-Lorraine. Finally Schuman's belief showed itself as well in his emphasis on the social doctrine of the Church and therewith on justice, morality, human rights and rule of law and in his perseverance to attain the goals related to those aspects. Schuman after all was convinced of him being an instrument of Providence and therewith of his need to give heed to his call to sanctity as a lay person in the middle of the world. For him this meant

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70. See: Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 84–86. The PDP was founded in 1924 (and survived until 1940). See also: Pennera, 178.

71. Robert Schuman, "Liberté de l'Église," (Rouen, July, 1938). Archives *Maison de Robert Schuman*, Scy-Chazelles. Pennera, 186; Lejeune, *Robert Schuman*, 96. Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 101–105. Schuman gave a speech on Freedom of the Church during the 'Social Week,' which was celebrated in Rouen and expressed the fundamental role of the Church as educator.

72. Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 49.

73. Pennera, 277–283.

politically speaking striving towards reconciliation with Germany, to solving the ‘German question’ and to safeguarding continental peace through working towards European unification.

### ***1.3 A Man of Straight Personality***

*When one has an idea and one knows that it is just and true, one has to realise it whatever it may cost until the end.*<sup>74</sup>

*Robert Schuman*

The quote above illustrates one of Schuman’s most distinguishing traits as a person and as a politician: his tenacity and thoroughness when it comes to working towards a just and true ideal. In Schuman’s case this ideal was European unification which would make war between the archenemies France and Germany impossible and safeguard peace and security on the European continent. His personality was important not only because of having the characteristic of perseverance, but also of those of others such as humility, piety, intelligence and sincerity. These characteristics made him easy to communicate and negotiate with, as will be made clear through the quotes of journalists, colleagues and acquaintances. Schuman’s straight personality inspired confidence and made others believe in his ability to strive towards upright and well thought through goals to achieve and therefore also towards the aim of European unification.

Apart from giving an impression of Schuman’s personality, this subchapter will shed more light on his ideal of reconciliation between France and Germany and of European unification. The section will include statements on his personality made by Schuman’s contemporaries who were, like him, concerned with European affairs.

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74. (mt) “Le Père de l’Europe, parole de Mr. R. Schuman,” *Le Figaro*, 31 December, 1960. “Quand on a une idée et qu’on sait qu’elle est juste et vrai, il faut la réaliser coûte que coûte jusqu’au bout.” See also: note 14.

An impression of inhabitants of the village Scy-Chazelles will close this section commenting on his personality.

### 1.3.1 Personality

#### *Simplicity and conscience*

*Soup, two fried eggs, French beans and cheese, such a modest meal took our great Minister of Finance, while the others that surrounded him absorbed symbolic dishes in such a place such as: beef tongue and lamb's brains. And, without the waitress having to ask him, Mr. Schuman adds conscientiously the bills for the bread to his expenses.*<sup>75</sup>

*Among the politicians of the IV<sup>th</sup> Republic, there is no one nicer than Mr. Schuman. Already during the last few years of the III<sup>d</sup> Republic (when he was vice President of the Chamber) he was different from the rest of the parliamentary staff because of the simplicity of his manners and the sobriety of his words. He was in nothing similar to an ordinary politician, desiring fame and always on the lookout for a portfolio. One can say, as I believe, that when he occupied a ministerial post, this had happened without him searching for it, with the feeling of fulfilling a duty.*<sup>76</sup>

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75.(mt) "Simplicité et conscience," *Le Pays*, 18 July, 1947. "Potage, deux oeufs sur le plat, haricots verts et fromage, tel futile sobre repas de notre grand argentier, tandis qu'autour de lui d'autres convivent absorbaient des mets symboliques dans un tel lieu: langue de boeuf et cervelle de mouton. Et, sans que la serveuse eût besoin de se lui réclamer, M. Schuman ajoute consciencieusement des tickets de pain au montant son addition. Si tous nos ministres lui ressemblaient! Murmura un vieux journaliste."

76. (mt) Pierre Bernus, "La situation difficile de M. Robert Schuman," *Journal de Genève*, 26 May, 1941. "Parmi les hommes politiques de la IV<sup>e</sup> République, il n'en est guère de plus sympathique que M. Schuman. Déjà dans les dernières années de la III<sup>e</sup> République (il fut à cette époque vice-président de la Chambre), il se distinguait dans la masse du personnel parlementaire, par la simplicité de ses manières et la sobriété de ses paroles. Il n'a rien du politicien courant, avide de réclame et toujours à l'affût d'un portefeuille. On peut dire, je crois, que quand il a occupé un poste ministerial, cela a été sans le chercher, avec le sentiment de remplir un devoir." See also: "Aussenminister Dr. Robert Schuman: Deutsch-französische Verständigung" *Der Sonntag im Bild*, February 1950. "...von seinen Freunden geehrt, von seinen Gegnern geachtet, weil er vielleicht der einzige Politiker war, dem die politische Betätigung nicht Erfüllung persönlicher und ehrgeiziger Pläne oder Mittel zum Zweck des Geldverdienens oder Möglichkeit und Gelegenheit zur Vermehrung irgendwelcher Hausmacht bedeutet, sondern in aller Ehrlichkeit und Wirklichkeit Dienst an seinem Volke und an seiner Heimat."

Schuman firmly believed that man, although imperfect, is an instrument of Providence.<sup>77</sup> He was certain that Providence makes use of man to accomplish great ideals that are beyond man's capacities.<sup>78</sup>

Robert Schuman lived and acted from a deep Christian faith. This meant that he lived in accordance with principles such as justice, honesty, perseverance, courage, modesty, self-effacement, sobriety and humility, all linked up with truth in charity and charity in truth. This might partially explain his courage in launching a great undertaking like the European unification, as well as his perseverance to carry it through whatever effort it might cost. The following testimonies show furthermore that his Christian integrity was reflected clearly in his professional and personal life.

His Latin culture and his attachment to Rome, mother of the churches, belong to his innermost being.<sup>79</sup>

Few men in our Parliament are so much esteemed as Robert Schuman. Even those that do not agree with his ideas or even oppose them, respect him for his nobility of character, his working capacity and the power of his faith.<sup>80</sup>

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77. His intense Christian life and the service to his country and to the European unification made the Catholic Church start his process of beatification, which will take, as always, several years before being finished and ratified. Precisely because of the debate on the Christian roots of the EU during the possible introduction of a European Constitution, the importance of Schuman's vision on the EU became even more necessary. Schuman was born in a Catholic family and always showed a religious restlessness. In his youth he thought about becoming a priest, took part in Catholic associations, and lived a solid Christian life based on Scripture and the Eucharist. He never got married.

78. Schuman, *Pour l'Europe*, 57. "Nous sommes tous des instruments, bien imparfaits, d'une Providence qui s'en sert dans l'accomplissement des grands desseins qui nous dépassent." See quote at the beginning of the thesis.

79.(mt) Roth, 10. "Sa culture latine et son attachement à Rome, mère des Églises, appartiennent à son être le plus profond."

80.(mt) "Un Européen: Robert Schuman," *Le Figaro*, Les Livres et la Politique, 1 February, 1955. "Peu d'hommes dans notre Parlement jouissent d'autant d'estime que Robert Schuman. Ceux-là même qui ne partagent pas ses idées ou qui

Robert Schuman, who formed part of all governments since the liberation, appears to be ever more, since his arrival at the Quai d'Orsay, the incarnation of this modest, reasonable, prudent and at the same time European France, that is changing its old fashioned great power-politics for a politics of dedication to really constructive tasks.<sup>81</sup>

When comparing him to Aristide Briand<sup>82</sup> he was very much a man of common sense, concise, and without Briand's inspiring charisma by which people were carried away, but he was also without Briand's illusions; proper to him were his professionalism and prosaic realism next to the industriousness proper to his forefathers who were farm-holders from Lorraine.<sup>83</sup>

The power of his faith, his nobility of character, sobriety, industriousness, modesty, prudence and professionalism are illustrated in the quotes above. The following quote seems to portray Schuman's personality in one description:

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les combattent, éprouvent de respect pour la noblesse de son caractère, sa puissance de travail et l'ardeur de sa foi."

81.(mt) *France-Belgique Informations, Pays-Bas-Luxembourg*, Paris, 15 March 1949. Archives, *Maison de Robert Schuman*, Scy-Chazelles. "Robert Schuman, qui a fait partie de tous les gouvernements qui se sont succédés depuis la libération, apparaît de plus en plus, - depuis son arrive au Quai d'Orsay, - comme une incarnation de cette France modérée, raisonnable, prudente et tout à fait européenne qui se détourne de la politique périmée de grande puissance, pour se consacrer à des tâches vraiment constructives."

82. Aristide Briand (1862–1932), Prime Minister of France and later Minister of Foreign Affairs, was famous for his politics to achieve international peace. His thoughts on international politics may well have been a source of inspiration for his future fellow Minister of Foreign Affairs Robert Schuman. Briand's main objective was the elimination of war. His method to achieve this goal was to attack the heart of the problem rather than its symptoms. He knew how to approach people and was famous for his oratorical skills and persuasiveness. Briand's thoughts were appreciated by Schuman for striving towards political cooperation among European states so as to safeguard peace on the continent, See Poidevin, *homme d'état*, 53, 84, 117; Roth, 186. There is, however, no written evidence that Briand's thoughts on politics had any influence on Schuman. See Roth, 202. Briand's influence is even denied by Muñoz, 48.

83.(mt) Kindler, "Robert Schuman," "Nüchtern, sächlich, phrasenlos und ohne den begeisternden und mitreisenden Schwung Briands, aber auch ohne dessen Illusionen, mit der Zäglichkeit und dem prosaischen Wirklichkeitssinn und Arbeitseifer seiner lothringischen Bauernvorfahren."

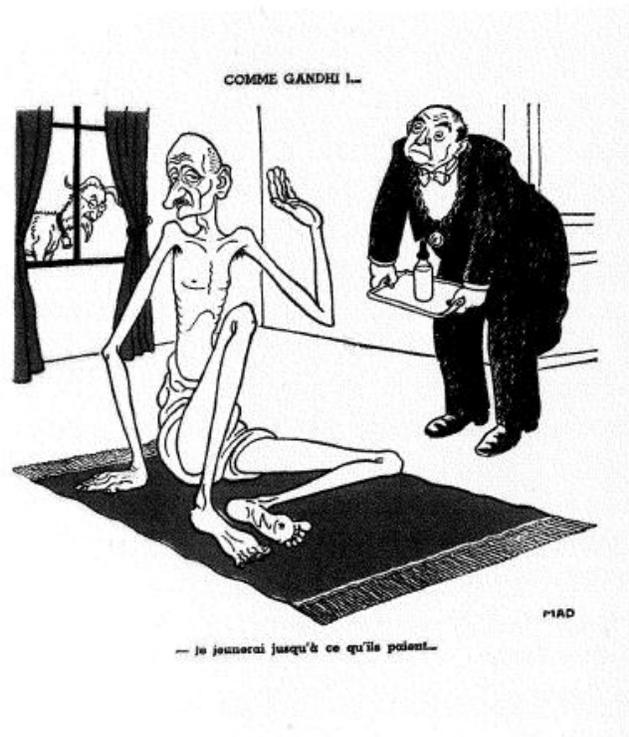
All those who have met Mr. Schuman during his stay in Antwerp, have realised how attractive his personality was and how much his personal attitude and familiar movements coincided with the way he acted during public events. Everything in him revealed the man that acts with a delicate conscience towards his duties, to whatever task he undertakes be it modest or important. His clear, precise language without embellishment, that he pronounces slowly because he wants it to be consistent with his thoughts, is that of a constructor [...] The movements of his long and skinny, but muscular arms reflect his words. Through his glasses his blue eyes shine with a little bit of malice that gives a strange sweetness. No unrest, no arrogance on his face, but a very clean will of an honest man that is unable not to be straightforward, to be unfaithful or to betray.

Mr. Schuman is not a politician. He is a great server of his country and of the generous ideas that all those who want fraternity and peace long for these days.<sup>84</sup>

Schuman came to serve the country, to forget about self and to focus on the ideal of brotherhood and peace. Other testimonies refer to his sense of humour, for instance when commenting on the cartoons people made of him. Those cartoons always referred to his baldness, his deep faith or his sobriety.

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84. (mt) "M.Schuman nous parle du mouvement Social-Chrétien en Europe," *La Métropole*, 21 January, 1954. "tous ceux qui pendant son séjour à Anvers, ont approché M. Schuman, ont réalisé combien, était attachante sa personne et combien elle répondait, dans son comportement privé et ses gestes familiers au caractère de ses activités publiques. Tout en lui révèle l'homme qui, à quelque tâche modeste ou supérieure qu'il s'adonne, agit avec une conscience scrupuleuse de ses devoirs. Son langage clair, précis, sans floritures, qu'il veut lent parce qu'il le veut adéquate à sa pensée, est celui d'un constructeur [...] Les gestes de ses longs bras maigres mais musclés sont à l'image de ses mots. Au travers de ses lunettes, ses prunelles bleues pétillent avec une pointe de malice qui en relève l'étrange douceur. Rien d'inquiet, ni d'arrogant dans son regard mais une volonté très nette d'honnête homme qu'on sent incapable de biaiser, de renier ou de trahir [...] M. Schuman n'est pas un politicien. C'est un grand serviteur de son pays et des idées généreuses auxquelles se rattachent aujourd'hui tous ceux qui aspirent à la fraternité des peuples et à la paix."



From: *Robert Schuman, 1886 – 1963 et les débuts de l'Europe*

The fact that Schuman himself was not bothered about this is made clear by his remark to a train conductor who did not recognize Schuman as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and as such allowed to take a first class seat for free. He did not believe Schuman to be the Minister because Schuman took not a first but a second-class trip home. Schuman's reaction to his surprised face was:

“No, no” says Schuman friendly and takes his wide-brimmed felt hat off, “look, I am really the Minister, you must have seen some of the cartoons of me?”<sup>85</sup>

Schuman's character suited a man who lives in accordance with his faith. His conduct was a logical result precisely of living his faith in a

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85.(mt) “Robert Schuman, der Einsame vom Quai d’Orsay,” *Die Weltwoche*, 21 November, 1952. “Nein, nein”, sagte Schuman freundlich und nahm seinen breitrandigen schwarzen Filzhut vom Kopf, “sehen Sie, ich bin wirklich der Minister – Sie haben doch sicher schon Karikaturen von mir gesehen?”

natural way as is also reflected in the quotes above. Regarding his Catholicism, Schuman himself stressed the fact that Catholicism is not only a faith, but also a social doctrine<sup>86</sup> in which man with his transcendent essence is at the core. A clear example of how he took this to heart is his defence of human rights; specifically when he fought for the right to confessional trade unions, as explained before, when that right was threatened right after the First World War.

There are striking similarities in all testimonies of Schuman's personality, of which only several have been quoted. The great majority of them stress how his deeply Christian attitude in life permeated his entire being as a man in his personal life and as a politician.

André Philip (1902–1970), one of Schuman's colleagues, for example, was impressed by Schuman's sincere faith and the way it informed all his actions. He observed that Schuman's personality was led by his Catholic faith, expressed in the modest but clear way in which he acted and reacted and in his motto that he had only come to serve. He was, according to Philip, always respectful towards man and true to the inner vocation that gave sense to his life:

What first struck me about him was how his interior life shone forth; he was, it seemed to me, a dedicated man without personal desires, without ambition, of a total sincerity and intellectual honesty, who only sought to serve where he felt the call to serve. By tradition he was conservative, hostile to innovations, by temperament he was peaceful, shy and hesitant. Often he hedged, delayed his decision, tried to finesse with the call he felt in the depth of his conscience. Then, when there was nothing else to do and he was sure of what his interior voice was demanding of him, he would brusquely take the most courageous initiatives and push them to their logical conclusion, unmoved by critics, attacks or threats.<sup>87</sup>

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86. See: Roth, 199.

87.(mt) André Philip in René Lejeune, *Père de l'Europe*, (Paris: Fayard, 2000), Preface. André Philip was a Professor in Politics, Commissioner of the French Committee of National Liberation and later of General De Gaulle's

Schuman's biographer Poidevin writes that Schuman was a defender of western Christian civilization his entire life. With his deep faith he devoted himself entirely to the common good as a man who never forgot the essential values of Christian Humanism.<sup>88</sup>

Schuman's friend, Henri Brugmans, President of the College of Europe in Bruges, made a similar statement during a speech he gave in honour of Schuman's Charlemagne Award in 1958, stressing that Schuman's faith also deeply influenced his political outlook:

This politician is not only a man of State, but also a man who pulls his strength from the fullness and depth of a universal spiritual life, because there, even the word 'Europe' becomes too tight. Rooted in his home country he is a European from Lorraine. But he is still more: a friend of humanity, a member of this humanity, a man in short.<sup>89</sup>

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provisional government in London and Algiers, socialist Deputy of the Rhône and Minister of Finance and of National Economy. He was a Protestant and knew Schuman well. "J'ai connu Robert Schuman pendant une quinzaine d'années au Parlement, au gouvernement, puis au Mouvement européen. Ce qui m'a d'abord frappé en lui, c'était le rayonnement de sa vie intérieure. On était devant un homme consacré, sans désires personnels, sans ambition, d'une totale sincérité et humilité intellectuelle qui ne cherchait qu'à servir, là et au moment où il se sentait appelé. Par tradition, il était conservateur, hostile aux innovations; par tempérament, il était pacifique, timide et hésitant. Souvent il a louvoyé, retardé la décision, essayé de ruser avec l'appel qui se faisait entendre au fond de sa conscience; puis quand il n'y avait plus rien à faire, qu'il était sûr de ce qu'exigeait de lui sa voix intérieure, il prenait brusquement les initiatives les plus hardes et les poussait jusqu'au bout, insensible aux critiques, aux attaques, aux menaces." "Dans l'atmosphère enfiévrée des débats parlementaires, il était rafraîchissant de rencontrer un homme toujours prêt à engager le dialogue, cherchant à persuader, tenant compte des objections, toujours avec le même calme et une entière courtoisie. Pour atteindre son but, même le plus important, il n'a jamais employé un moyen vulgaire, exagéré le poids d'un argument, ni élevé la voix. Mais par-dessus tout, il restera dans la mémoire de ceux qui l'ont connu comme le type du vrai démocrate, imaginatif et créateur, combatif dans sa douceur, toujours respectueux de l'homme, fidèle à une vocation intime qui donnait le sens à la vie."

88.(mt) Poidevin, *Robert Schuman*, 423. "D'un bout à l'autre de sa vie, il a su se montrer le défenseur d'un certain type de civilisation chrétienne occidentale. Profondément croyant entièrement dévoué au bien public, cet homme n'a jamais oublié les valeurs essentielles de l'humanisme chrétien..."

89.(mt) Henri Brugmans, speech in *Du Pater Europae aux Pères de l'Europe, 1950-2010*, (Milan: Silvana Editoriale Spa, 2010), 28 "Ce politique n'est pas seulement un homme d'État, mais il est aussi un homme qui tire ses forces de la plénitude et de la profondeur d'une vie spirituelle universelle - car là, même le mot 'Europe' devient trop étroit. Enraciné dans sa patrie, il est un Européen de Lorraine.

Two other observations made by Brugmans refer to Schuman's behaviour as a man of state. They illustrate aspects of his personality such as modesty, prudence, friendliness, sharp insight and capacity to understand and unite:

I met him on several occasions. I met him in big assemblies where he held his modest and prudent speeches and because of that so resolute and convincing, consistent with his personality. People shouted so many times in our days that modern man will listen when a wise and dynamic idealist takes quietly the floor. That's why a great calm has always reigned among the multitude when Schuman spoke.

I met him as well in small gatherings and the moment the discussion threatened to disintegrate, people turned towards him: "Mister President, what do you think about this?" They could then always be sure that a clear and intelligent answer would follow that would give credit to each of them. Because the real democrat likes to listen to and understand the others.<sup>90</sup>

Adenauer described Schuman as "a wise and good man, a statesman, a great Frenchman and a great European. I am happy that I can call him a friend."<sup>91</sup> In a letter to Schuman after a visit of De Gaulle to Germany, Adenauer said that he considers Schuman to have played a crucial part in cultivating a friendship between France and Germany. He saw Schuman as the man who laid down the foundation for the Coal and Steel Community and expressed his gratitude as well

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Mais il est plus encore: un ami de l'humanité, un membre de cette humanité - un homme en somme."

90.(mt) Ibid., 52. "Je l'ai rencontré à plusieurs occasions. Dans les grandes assemblées où il tint des discours, si modeste et prudent, et pourtant si résolu et convaincant, à l'image de sa personne. On a tant crié à notre époque que l'homme moderne tend l'oreille lorsqu'un idéaliste sage et dynamique prend tranquillement la parole. C'est pourquoi un grand calme a toujours régné parmi la multitude lorsque Schuman parlait." "Je l'ai aussi rencontré dans de petites réunions et lorsqu'à l'occasion, la discussion menaçait de s'éparpiller, on se tournait vers lui: "M. le Président, qu'en pensez-vous?" On était alors toujours assuré que viendrait une réponse claire et intelligente qui tenterait de rendre justice à chacun. Car le véritable démocrate trouve son plaisir à écouter et à comprendre les autres. "

91. Adenauer's words in: Schuman, *Pour l'Europe*, Preface.

as his hope to see him again.<sup>92</sup> Although Adenauer's comments do not refer specifically to Schuman's personality, they do echo his appreciation of Schuman's courage to have made the reconciliation between France and Germany and the foundation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) possible. They also reflect his sympathy and friendship for Schuman.

David Heilbron Price, expert in Schuman's lifetime, philosophy and thoughts on Europe, comments on Schuman:

What he did not learn from the suffering of his family in wars, he knew from his own consuming interest in history, economics and his openness to people. The politics of the coal and steel industry, its commerce, its technology, its trade union problems, capitalism and communism were Schuman's bread and butter as a deputy. Schuman brought something else to this problem [of solving the cause of Franco-German war] that eludes most modern analyses. It was his erudite learning and interest in philosophy and theology and the causes of war. Without that the European Union would not have succeeded in its goal to eliminate war in western Europe.<sup>93</sup>

The above makes clear that according to Price, Schuman was motivated to make war in Western Europe impossible and anxiously searched for the way to achieve a practical and durable peace with a philosophical and theological foundation.

All the aspects mentioned of Schuman's personality contribute to the assumption that Schuman was a man who was especially suitable to work towards European integration. His tenacious

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92. (mt) Adenauer, letter to Schuman, 1962. Archives, *Maison de Robert Schuman*, Scy-Chazelles. "Pendant la visite de général De Gaulle, la semaine dernière, j'ai souvent pensé à vous. C'est en effet à vous que l'on doit l'amitié qui unit maintenant nos deux pays; par votre initiative du pool Charbon-Acier vous en avez posé la pierre angulaire. Je pense toujours à notre tâche commune avec reconnaissance. Il me tient à cœur, plus précisément dans les circonstances présents, de vous en exprimer toute ma gratitude. Ce serait une grande joie pour moi s'il nous était donné encore une fois de nous revoir. De tout cœur, votre Konrad Adenauer."

93. David Heilbron Price, *Robert Schuman and the making of Europe* (manuscript), 14.

personality meant that he did not give up on the ideal of European unification until its realization in a concrete way.

### 1.3.2 Commemorated

*His vision was wide and far-reaching; he was a creator of the future.*<sup>94</sup>

*Antoine Pinay*<sup>95</sup>

This part will present reflections on Schuman as a politician made by two colleagues of respectively the European Parliament and Euratom Commission at the Memorial service of Schuman, honorary president of the European Parliament, in 1963.

Gaetano Martino,<sup>96</sup> President of the European Parliament, highlighted Schuman's insight into Europe's future and his drive to come to a unification of Europe fostered by his firm belief and faith. He did so in his speech in memory of Robert Schuman in 1963, the year Schuman died.<sup>97</sup> Martino emphasized that Schuman's idea of the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was mainly political. By paving the way economically, the great political aim of the unification of Europe could be attained. He mentioned the importance of this initiative and aim; without Schuman's vision and initiative to launch the ECSC, the European Economic Community (EEC) would never have come about. Martino reflected on Schuman's moral courage, recalling that

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94. See: Jean-Marie Pelt, *Robert Schuman, Father of Europe*, Publisher Serge Domini, Robert Schuman Foundation.

95. Antoine Pinay (1891–1994), conservative politician, French Prime-Minister in 1952.

96. Gaetano Martino (1900–1967), Italian politician and President of the European Parliament from 1962 until 1964.

97. Gaetano Martino in *Ter nagedachtenis aan Robert Schuman*, discourses held on 16 September 1963 during an exceptional meeting of the European Parliament in remembrance of Robert Schuman, honorary president of the European Parliament, 1963. The book was published by the European Parliament.

the Schuman Plan had been a *saut dans l'inconnu*<sup>98</sup> (a leap in the dark) yet as a result Schuman had opened the way in a dark forest, providing guidelines for new and elevated politics in which negotiations were no longer determined by maintaining traditional balance, but by a growing cooperation between European nations sharing a common ideal.

According to Martino, Schuman based his views on three principles. The first principle was the necessity of an economic union in Europe in order to achieve an integrated political European Union. In the Schuman Plan of 9 May 1950 Schuman stated that the cooperation in the fields of steel and coal provided the immediate foundation for economic development as a first step to European unification. Furthermore, the realization of an economic community would become the source of a broader community of nations that had been separated from each other for a long time.

The second Schuman principle Martino mentioned is that the cooperation of the first six European nations should be the centre point of a broader association of nations. Schuman wanted an organized Europe that was alive and ever more capable to attract other nations and extend its borders.

The third principle was the need to progressively transfer national democracies to the international field and to safeguard supranationality in the European Community. These political principles originated from Schuman's wish to eliminate the causes of war and to protect peace in Europe. He acknowledged the power of hatred and precisely for that reason he recommended perseverance and caution during the process of unification. He advised to look ahead and at the same time to be watchful so that a "Europe of the spirit" would be the result rather than merely an economic union.

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98. Henry Brugmans, *L'idée Européenne*, (Bruges: De Tempel, 1970), 162.

Martino continued by commenting that Schuman was a firm believer whose life and work were imbued with his Catholic faith, which also explained his perseverance and self-assurance. Schuman's inner strength came from his faith. This observation was echoed by Paul de Groote, member of the Euratom Commission. He regarded Robert Schuman as "a leader for the European conscience and as the man who will always be the one who showed us the way from which we should never part."<sup>99</sup>

Both Martino and De Groote acknowledged Schuman's faith as the driving force behind both his private person and the public effort of the European unification process. In fact, it was his faith that made Schuman reject the notion that these two realms of private and public were separable. De Groote even regarded Schuman's way of thinking as the line a European conscience should follow. Both confirmed that Schuman was a man of great ideals who devoted himself to the unification of Europe, proposing the step-by-step method of economic integration so as to come to an increasingly close political unification and thus provide and maintain peace and security in Europe.

### **1.3.3 Inhabitants of Scy-Chazelles**

An impression of Schuman's personality given by those who knew him in his own habitat, is added here to show that Schuman's private and public life mirrored each other.<sup>100</sup> They did so in the sense that both were driven by and directed towards the accomplishment of his ideal of correspondence to his personal vocation, both in daily life at

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99. Paul de Groote, in *Ter nagedachtenis aan Robert Schuman*, 20. See also quote in Introduction.

100. In August 2009 I visited the village of Scy-Chazelles, close to Metz, where Schuman spent most of his life. I spoke to many people and asked them about the kind of person Schuman was. One of them was Émile Scheffer.

home and in daily life at work. He thus manifested a tangible unity or integrity of life.

Émile Scheffer (1913) an acquaintance of Schuman, commented on Schuman: “He was such a nice, warm and simple man. He always went from here by bus or on foot when he had to go to Metz. And if he had to go to Paris, he travelled second class by train. He mingled with us when he was in the village, but he always had little time as he was a very hard-working man. He was very pious. He went for daily mass.” He summarized his impression of Schuman with: “*Il était un homme de Dieu*” (He was a man of God). The other people in Scy-Chazelles made similar comments such as “he was very sober and very intelligent,” “he was full of virtues,” “he was very pious” and, of course, they all were very proud of “their” Robert Schuman. The *Maison de Robert Schuman*, which is Schuman’s home turned into a museum, is enriched with a well-documented audio-visual exposition on European unification. His house has been restored to its original state, as it was when he passed away in September 1963. Its sobriety is conspicuous and the autographs and large amount of books on Thomism and Catholic religion, history, Europe and geography clearly reflect Schuman’s main interests. The original documents, letters, and decorations in the archives reflect the depth and intensity of his life. Schuman’s life must have been of an exemplary Christian stature, as it has led to the start of the process of his beatification on 29 May 2004.<sup>101</sup>

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101. “Robert Schuman nearing beatification”, *Zenit*, 16 May, 2003. Éric Roussel, “Les paradoxes de la relation Jean Monnet – Robert Schuman” in: *Robert Schuman et les Pères de l’Europe*, (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008), 92. Rettman, Andrew, “‘EU Saint’ waiting for a miracle”, *EUObserver* 9 May 2011, <http://euobserver.com/9/32291?rk=1>.

## ***1.4 Summary***

Schuman was a man of his region and a man of faith. He was a man of his region thanks to his parental background. His father's strong connection to Lorraine made Schuman also strongly connected to Lorraine. Lorraine was a contested border region of crucial importance for both Germany and France, two archenemies soon after the Treaty of Verdun (843). Schuman was a man of a region that had remained Roman Catholic through the centuries and that had many important bishoprics. The region was very much wanted for its coal and steel, important raw material for the war-industry. Schuman had personally experienced two wars and the switch from German to French nationality when Alsace-Lorraine returned from Germany to France after the First World War (1918).

An important asset of his youth was that he had learned French and German next to Luxembourgish and that he was familiar with the three cultures. All these experiences left their mark on the way Schuman thought about European unification. They fostered his understanding of the Luxembourgian, German and French culture and of the interests of all three countries. This also facilitated his attitude of reconciliation and thereby his openness towards a European unification process in which common interests would be taken care of.

Schuman was a man who lived his Catholic faith. He grew up in a Catholic environment and joined Catholic associations such as the *Görres-Gesellschaft*, which tried to influence the scientific world with Catholic doctrine and morals. He was a man who headed the Catholic youth group in Metz and stressed the importance of Catholic formation. He was a man who considered being called to the priesthood, but decided to remain a layman so as to fulfil his call to sanctity in the middle of the world and for that reason to pursue a

career as a politician. He was a man who took the teachings of the Popes to heart and put them into practice. He knew the works of Thomas Aquinas and read those of other saints. He was known for being a man of high standing morals.

His personality was one that fitted a person who lives his faith and profession with integrity. He was a person characterized by virtues like honesty, justice, thoroughness of professional work, perseverance, humility, courage, sobriety and piety. He went for daily Mass and felt himself to be an instrument in the hands of God.

All these aspects of Schuman's life and personality contribute to the assumption that Schuman was a pre-eminent candidate to work towards European unification and that he prepared the ground for the birth and form of the Schuman Declaration.

