

“Towards a Genuine Fraternity between Christians and Muslims”

Dear Muslim Brothers and Sisters,

It gives us great joy to offer you our heartfelt congratulations and good wishes on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr at the conclusion of Ramadan, a month dedicated to fasting, prayer and helping the poor. Last year, the first year of his ministry, Pope Francis personally signed the Message addressed to you on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr. On another occasion, he also called you “our brothers and sisters” (Angelus, 11 August 2013).

We all can recognize the full significance of these words. In fact, Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters in the one human family, created by the One God. Let us recall what Pope John Paul II said to Muslim religious leaders in 1982: "All of us, Christians and Muslims, live under the sun of the one merciful God. We both believe in one God who is the creator of man. We acclaim God's sovereignty and we defend man's dignity as God's servant. We adore God and profess total submission to him. Thus, in a true sense, we can call one another brothers and sisters in faith in the one God." (Kaduna, Nigeria, 14 February 1982).

We thank the Almighty for what we have in common, while remaining aware of our differences. We perceive the importance of promoting a fruitful dialogue built upon mutual respect and friendship. Inspired by our shared values and strengthened by our sentiments of genuine fraternity, we are called to work together for justice, peace and respect for the rights and dignity of every person.

We feel responsible in a particular way for those most in need: the poor, the sick, orphans, immigrants, victims of human trafficking, and those suffering from any kind of addiction. As we know, our contemporary world faces grave challenges which call for solidarity on the part of all people of good will. These include threats to the environment, the crisis of the global economy and high levels of unemployment particularly among young people. Such situations give rise to a sense of vulnerability and a lack of hope for the future.

Let us also not forget the problems faced by so many families which have been separated, leaving behind loved ones and often small children. Let us work together, then, to build bridges of peace and promote reconciliation especially in areas where Muslims and Christians together suffer the horror of war.

May our friendship inspire us always to cooperate in facing these many challenges with wisdom and prudence. In this way we will help to diminish tension and conflict, and advance the common good. We will also demonstrate that religions can be a source of harmony for the benefit of society as a whole.

Let us pray that reconciliation, justice, peace and development will remain uppermost among our priorities, for the welfare and good of the whole human family. Together with Pope Francis, we are happy to send you our cordial best wishes for a joyful celebration and a life of prosperity in peace.

From the Vatican, July 2014

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran President

Father Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, MCCJ Secretary