



PONTIFICAL COUNCIL
FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

*Christians and Sikhs:
Nurturing a Culture of Hope in Pandemic Times*

MESSAGE FOR GURU NANAK PRAKASH DIWAS
2020

Vatican City

Dear Sikh Friends,

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), most fraternally, extends its prayerful good wishes and festal greetings to you on the occasion of Guru Nanak Prakash Diwas celebrated on 30 November this year. May the celebration of this sacred festival, which commemorates the ‘birth of light’ in the person of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, usher in, in these difficult times of coronavirus pandemic, a light of renewed hope among you, and peace and joy in your lives, families and communities!

On this tenth anniversary - since the Pontifical Council formally and directly connected with you through its greetings cum message on Prakash Diwas - we thank you for your valued friendship and collaboration, and convey to you in particular, our appreciation for the humanitarian services that are generously being rendered by the Sikh community in different parts of the world to people affected by the current pandemic.

The largescale contagion of Covid-19, besides being a health-related pandemic, has affected almost all aspects of our lives – social, economic, emotional and religious – and given rise to many uncertainties and anxieties, resulting in a visibly widespread sense of helplessness and hopelessness among people. In this worldwide pandemic situation, our cherished tradition of sharing with you a few reflections on this occasion, most opportunely focuses this year on the need for all of us, in particular for the Sikhs and the Christians, to nurture a culture of hope among people.

Hope, in the words of Pope Francis, is “the humble virtue, the virtue that courses beneath the water of life that keeps us from drowning in the many difficulties” (*Morning Meditation in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae*, 17 March, 2016) we face in life. Despite despairs and desperations that we experience, it is hope that makes us go forward. It does not let ‘clouds of gloom’ envelop us and ‘passivity’ assail and prevail over us. Evoking resilience and responsibility, it enables us to begin afresh with confidence. The ‘virtue of hope’ easily unites humans, rebuilds confidence and reignites the passion to live. Persons displaying hope send out the message that ‘contagion of hope’ is possible and necessary for the present and future of humanity. The unprecedented spirit of service and solidarity, by individuals, communities and various groups including interreligious groups that we have witnessed during these pandemic times, is a profound and sure indicator that building ‘a culture of hope’ involves people of all creeds and cultures.

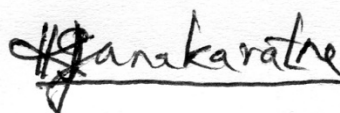
For us believers, hope springs from our religious conviction that God who created us and who sustains us will never abandon us and that “we are part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one another” (Pope Francis, *Extraordinary Moment of Prayer in Time of Epidemic*, 27 March, 2020; cfr. Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, 3 October, 2020, 32) and therefore, we are responsible for one another and for our ‘common home’. This conviction summons us to be ‘sowers of hope’ in our families, neighbourhoods and communities. It must make us believers restless till we reach out, with generous acts of kindness and compassion, to awaken the much needed hope in our brothers and sisters who are more affected than we are by the disastrous effects of the pandemic, in particular those who seem to have lost hopes due to the loss of their loved ones, livelihoods, jobs and dreams for a secure future. Solidarity witnessed during these days, moreover, needs to be perseveringly and progressively strengthened so that it becomes an essential part of our lifestyle and the cornerstone of the ‘culture of hope’ that we aim to build.

As believers who are steadfast in our respective religious convictions and as persons with shared values and shared concerns for the well-being of all, particularly those who feel despondent and discouraged in these difficult times, may we Christians and Sikhs do all we can, individually and collectively, and together with others, towards promoting a ‘culture of hope’ in society by becoming more and more and encouraging others as well to become “beacons of hope, as promoters and guarantors of fraternity” (Pope Francis, *Visit to the Supreme Buddhist Patriarch, Wat Ratchabophit Sathit Maha Simaram Temple, Bangkok, Thailand, 21 November, 2019*).

Wish you all once again a serene and joyous Prakash Diwas of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji!



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