

**Message for the Month of Ramadan and 'Id Al-Fitr 2019**  
**10 May 2019**

**“Christians and Muslims: Promoting Universal Fraternity”**,

Dear Muslim Brothers and Sisters,

The month of Ramadan with its dedication to fasting, prayer and almsgiving, is also a month for strengthening the spiritual bonds we share in Muslim-Christian friendship. I am pleased, therefore, to take this opportunity to wish you a peaceful and fruitful celebration of Ramadan.

Our religions invite us to “remain rooted in the values of peace; to defend the values of mutual understanding, *human fraternity* and harmonious coexistence; to re-establish wisdom, justice and love” (cf. *Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, Abu Dhabi, 4 February 2019).

We Muslims and Christians are called to open ourselves to others, knowing and recognizing them as brothers and sisters. In this way, we can tear down walls raised out of fear and ignorance and seek together to build bridges of friendship that are fundamental for the good of all humanity. We thus cultivate in our families and in our political, civil and religious institutions, a new way of life where violence is rejected, and the human person respected.

We are encouraged, therefore, to continue advancing the culture of dialogue as a means of cooperation and as a method of growing in knowledge of one another. In this context, I recall that Pope Francis, during his visit to Cairo, highlighted three fundamental guidelines for pursuing dialogue and knowledge among people of different religions: “the duty of identity, the courage of otherness and the sincerity of intentions” (*Address to the participants in the International Conference for Peace*, Al-Azhar Conference Center, Cairo, 28 April 2017).

In order to respect diversity, dialogue must seek to promote every person’s right to life, to physical integrity, and to fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of conscience, of thought, of expression and of religion. This includes the freedom to live according to one’s beliefs in both the private and public spheres. In this way, Christians and Muslims – as brothers and sisters – can work together for the common good.

It is my wish that the gesture and message of fraternity will find an echo in the hearts of all those holding positions of authority in the areas of social and civil life of the whole human family, and may lead all of us to put into practice not merely an attitude of tolerance but true and peaceful living together.

With heartfelt fraternal greetings, renewed esteem for our friendship, and in the name of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, I convey sincere best wishes for a fruitful month of Ramadan and a joyous *'Id al-Fitr*.

+ *Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, M.C.C.J.*  
*Secretary*