

Vatican message for Ramadan urges universal fraternity

In a message for Islam's holy month of Ramadan and Id al-Fitr, the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue has released a message, urging Christians and Muslims worldwide to build bridges of brotherhood and promote the culture of dialogue.



Friday prayers during Ramadan in Jakarta, Indonesia, May 10, 2019. (ANSA)

Robin Gomes, *Vatican News*, <https://www.vaticannews.va/>, 10 May 2019

The Vatican is calling on Christians and Muslims worldwide to promote human fraternity and harmonious existence by building bridges of friendship and promoting a culture of dialogue where violence is rejected and the human person is respected.

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) made the invitation in a message to wish Muslims worldwide a peaceful and fruitful celebration of the fasting month Ramadan that ends with Id al-Fitr.

“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,” notes the message entitled, “Christians and Muslims: Promoting Universal Fraternity”, signed by PCID Secretary, Bishop Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot.

Quoting the document signed by Pope Francis and the Gran Iman Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb of Al-Azhar in Abu Dhabi on February 4, Bishop Ayuso invites Christians and Muslims to “remain rooted in the values of peace; to defend the values of mutual understanding, human fraternity and harmonious coexistence; to reestablish wisdom, justice and love.”

Building bridges for common good

The message reminds Muslims and Christians that by opening themselves to others, knowing and recognizing them as brothers and sisters, they 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.” This way, they can cultivate a new way of life in their political, civil and religious institutions where violence is rejected, and the human person is respected. The message encourages the followers of both communities to continue promoting the “culture of dialogue as a means of cooperation and as a method of growing in the knowledge of one another”.

Respect for diversity and freedoms

In this regard, the PCID cites the three fundamental guidelines that Pope Francis proposes for the promotion of dialogue and knowledge among people of different religions, namely, “the duty of identity, the courage of otherness and the sincerity of intentions”.

The message further explains that respect for diversity calls for a dialogue that seeks to promote the right to life of every person, 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.”

Bishop Ayuso concluded wishing that the followers of both faiths put into practice not merely an attitude of tolerance but true and peaceful living together.