

## **Young Christians and Muslims pray, discuss ecological issues at Taizé**

"Acting together for human fraternity and the safeguarding of creation" is theme of July 15-18 meeting at famed ecumenical community in France



*Muslim and Catholic worshippers at a gathering organized by the Taizé Community in 2017. (Photo by GUILLAUME POLI/ CIRIC)*

### **Charlotte Gambert, France, *La Croix International*, 16 July 2021**

"In the face of (these) environmental challenges, a common witness of the Christian denominations and also of the different religions, is even more important -- together with all those who find the motivation for their commitment elsewhere."

This was the message delivered by Brother Alois, prior of the ecumenical community of Taizé, in an article dated May 26, 2020.

More than a year later, the fourth meeting in Taizé for friendship between young Christians and Muslims (July 15-18) is a concrete expression of this message.

### **A meeting between "*Fratelli tutti*" and "*Laudato si*"**

Some sixty participants were expected at the 2021 meeting, which will certainly make it more modest in number than the three previous ones that took place in Taizé since 2017.

They all included up to 200 young people.

Though the 2020 event was simply cancelled because of COVID-19, it seemed important to maintain the 2021 meeting, despite the constraints linked to the ongoing pandemic.

With the theme "Acting together for human fraternity and the safeguarding of creation", the meeting will notably focus on Pope Francis' encyclicals *Fratelli tutti* and *Laudato si*', addressing social friendship and the safeguarding of creation.

The weekend is to feature video testimonies from Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon, on site discussion, workshops and times of prayer.

Among the speakers are several imams, Radia Bakkouch, former president of Coexister, Father Vincent Feroldi, delegate to Muslims for the Bishops' Conference of France, and Elena Lasida, president of the "Église Verte" (Green Church) network in France.

### **Ecology, a place for reconciliation**

"I think that today ecology is a place where different religions meet, a place for reconciliation as well," confided Elena Lasida, who is participating for the first time in this type of meeting.

She said the universal character of religions, as well as of the question of ecology, particularly legitimizes believers to play a role in this matter.

She said one of the challenges of the weekend gathering is to help the younger generations see that ecology can be a real place of dialogue between religions.

"I expect that there will be a real space for meeting and dialogue," she said.

At Taizé this weekend, priority is given to the encounter: each person is invited to the prayer of the other, and informal meetings will be encouraged.