

## **Pope to attend Sant'Egidio-sponsored ecumenical meeting at the Colosseum**

Francis will be present at the Oct. 7 final session of the meeting in which the yearly Appeal for Peace is proclaimed and signed by religious leaders



*A handout picture provided by the Vatican Media shows Pope Francis giving audience to the president of Sant'Egidio Community, Marco Impagliazzo, in Vatican City, 19 April 2021. (Photo by ANSA / Vatican Media Press Office handout /MaxPPP)*

*La Croix International* staff, Vatican City, 28 September 2021

Pope Francis will join other leaders of world religions in an international prayer for peace initiative that takes place in the spirit of Assisi, following the historic encounter called by John Paul II in 1986.

Entitled “World Meeting for Peace, Peoples as Brothers, Future Earth Religions and Cultures in Dialogue”, the October 6-7 event is promoted by the Rome-based Community of Sant'Egidio and is the 35<sup>th</sup> such event.

The ecumenical event will see the participation of representatives of many Christian denominations such as the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Also participating will be Ahmad al-Tayyib, Great Imam of Al-Azhar (Egypt), Pinchas Goldschmidt, President of the Conference of European Rabbis, and leaders from major religions from all over the world.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Italian Minister of the Interior Luciana Lamorgese, the Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General Jeffrey Sachs, and Liberata Mulamula, the Tanzanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, have already confirmed their participation.

Pope Francis will be present at the final session of the meeting to be held October 7th afternoon in front of the Colosseum.

The core of the event is always the open air final ceremony in which the yearly Appeal for Peace is proclaimed and subsequently signed by all religious leaders.

The international meeting will include four forums dedicated to dialogue, peace, environment and the younger generations and will be attended by religious leaders as well as cultural and institutional personalities from 40 countries.

"We would like to open a perspective to look together at the world coming out of the pandemic," said Marco Impagliazzo, president of the Community of Sant'Egidio, in a press conference.

"There is a need to meet in person under the banner of dialogue between the leaders of different religions. Looking to the future, but also to listen together to the cry of the most vulnerable in order to understand the real situation of the world.

"The themes of universal brotherhood and care for the environment emerge clearly as a common concern of all religions and at the same time as a way out of the pandemic", he said.

The meeting will also be attended by people of all ages, including high school and university students and hundreds of young people from all over Europe.

"It is an important sign of a new start and of interest in peace", said Impagliazzo.

"It is not just a question of listening to the thirst for peace, rising from so many countries at war, but also of encouraging those who work for peace around the world, to work together to overcome war," he said.

The Community of Sant'Egidio has since 1987 promoted these international meetings for peace and they have taken place in various European and Mediterranean cities.

The Community of Sant'Egidio is a lay Catholic association dedicated to social service, founded in 1968 under the leadership of Andrea Riccardi.

In 1973 it was given a home at the former Carmelite monastery and church of Sant' Egidio in Rome and in 1986 it received recognition from the Holy See as an international association of the faithful.

All members are volunteers and unpaid who share a common spirituality and commitment to the poor, social justice, reconciliation and peace.