

## Vatican message for Ramadan urges promoting culture of friendship



*First Friday of Ramadan fasting in Srinagar (ANSA)*

The Vatican's Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue releases message for Islam's holy month of Ramadan and Id al-Fitr, urging both Christians and Muslims worldwide to join in building a "more peaceful, harmonious and joyful coexistence" as opposed to "a culture of hate" fuelled today by social media.

**Lisa Zengarini, *Vatican News*, 24 March 2023**

The Holy See is calling on Muslims and Christians worldwide to counter "the culture of hate" still undermining societies, by promoting together a "culture of love and friendship" building on their existing relations.

The Dicastery Interreligious Dialogue made the appeal in a message addressed to the "Muslims brothers and sisters", as they begin this week their fasting month of Ramadan that ends with Id al-Fitr.

### **Countering the "culture of hate"**

"Existing friendships are reinforced and others are built, paving the way for more peaceful, harmonious and joyful coexistence", notes the message entitled "Christians and Muslims: Promoters of Love and Friendship", and signed by Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, the Prefect of the Dicastery along with the Secretary, Msgr. Indunil Kodithuwakku Janakarathne Kankanamalage

In the face of "extremism, radicalism, disputes, and religiously motivated violence" the text highlights the need "to find the most appropriate ways of countering and overcoming" the "culture of hate" fuelling them.

Recalling the Second Vatican Council *Nostra Aetate Declaration on non-Christian Religions* (1965), the Vatican Dicastery reiterates that legitimate differences, should never make us ignore or forget "what we have in common".

*"All begins with our attitude towards each other, in particular when there are differences between us in religion, ethnicity, culture, language, or politics. Differences can be perceived as a threat, but everyone has the right to his or her specific identity with its diverse components, yet without ignoring or forgetting what we have in common"*

## **The role of social media**

The message goes on to note that “Negative attitudes and behaviours towards those who are different from us”, including “suspicion, fear, rivalry, discrimination, exclusion, persecution, polemics, insults, and backbiting”, are unfortunately numerous today and are fuelled by social media “perverting their role from being means for communication and friendship to being instruments for enmity and fighting.”

As pointed out by Pope Francis in his Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, “Aggression has found unparalleled room for expansion through computers and mobile devices.”

## **Promoting a culture of love and friendship through education**

The opposites of these negative behaviours, “are respect, goodness, charity, friendship, mutual care for all, forgiveness, cooperation for the common good, help to all those who are in any kind of need and care for the environment, in order to keep our ‘common home’ a safe and pleasant place where we can live together in peace and joy”. These values, says the Dicastery, should be promoted by a “sound education” of the new generations, in which family, schools and places of worship play a crucial role.

*“We cannot prevent and counter the culture of hatred and, instead promote a culture of love and friendship, without a sound education for future generations in all the spaces where they are formed: in the family, at school, in places of worship, and on social media.”*

“A world where justice, peace, fraternity and prosperity reign pleases the Almighty and brings joy, calling, therefore, our sincere and shared engagement”, the message concludes.