



**PONTIFICAL COUNCIL  
FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

*Christians and Muslims:  
called to promote a culture of peace*

MESSAGE FOR THE END OF RAMADAN  
'ID AL-FITR 1428 H. / 2007 A.D.

Vatican City

Dear Muslim Friends,

1. It gives me special pleasure to send you for the first time friendly and warmest greetings from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue on the occasion of your joyful feast of 'Id al-Fitr, with which the month-long fasting and prayer of Ramadan ends. This month is always an important time for the Muslim community and gives to each individual member a new strength for their personal, family and social existence. It matters that all of us witness to our religious beliefs with a life increasingly integrated and in conformity with the Creator's plan, a life concerned with serving our brothers and sisters in ever increasing solidarity and fraternity with members of other religions and all men of good will, in the desire to work together for the common good.

2. In the troubled times we are passing through, religious believers have, as servants of the Almighty, a duty above all to work in favour of peace, by showing respect for the convictions of individuals and communities everywhere through freedom of religious practice. Religious freedom, which must not be reduced to mere freedom of worship, is one of the essential aspects of freedom of conscience, which is the right of every individual and a cornerstone of human rights. It takes into account the requirement that a culture of peace and solidarity between men can be built in which everybody can be firmly engaged in the construction of an increasingly fraternal society, doing everything one can to reject, denounce and refuse every recourse to violence which can never be motivated by religion, since it wounds the very image of God in man. We know that violence, especially terrorism which strikes blindly and claims countless innocent victims, is incapable of resolving conflicts and leads only to a deadly chain of destructive hatred, to the detriment of mankind and of societies.

3. As religious believers, it's up to us all to be educators of peace, of human rights, of a freedom which respects each person, but also to ensure increasingly strong social bonds, because man must take care of his human brothers and sisters without discrimination. No individual in the national community should be excluded on the grounds of his or her race, religion, or any other personal characteristic. Together, as members of different religious traditions, we are called to spread a teaching which honours all human creatures, a message of love between individuals and peoples. We are particularly responsible for ensuring that our young people, who will be in charge of tomorrow's world, are formed in this spirit. It is above all the responsibility of families and then of those involved in the educational world, and of civic and religious authorities, all of whom have a duty to pay attention to the spread of a just teaching. They must provide everyone an education appropriate to his or her particular circumstances, especially a civic education which invites each young person to respect those around him or her, and to consider them as brothers and sisters

with whom he or she is daily called to live, not in indifference, but in fraternal care. It is thus more urgent than ever to teach to the younger generations, those fundamental human, moral and civic values which are necessary to both personal and community life. All instances of incivility must be made use of to remind the young of what is waiting for them in social life. It is the common good of every society and of the entire world which is at stake.

4. In this spirit, the pursuit and intensification of dialogue between Christians and Muslims must be considered important, in both educational and cultural dimensions. Thus all forces can be mobilised in the service of mankind and humanity so that the younger generations do not become cultural or religious blocs opposed to one another, but genuine brothers and sisters in humanity. Dialogue is the tool which can help us to escape from the endless spiral of conflict and multiple tensions which mark our societies, so that all peoples can live in serenity and peace and with mutual respect and harmony among their component groups.

To achieve this, I appeal to you with all my heart to heed my words, so that, by means of encounters and exchanges, Christians and Muslims will work together in mutual respect for peace and for a better future for all people; it will provide an example for the young people of today to follow and imitate. They will then have a renewed confidence in society and will see the advantage in belonging and taking part in its transformation. Education and example will also be a source of hope in the future for them.

5. This is the ardent hope I share with you: that Christians and Muslims continue to develop increasingly friendly and constructive relationships in order to share their specific riches, and that they will pay particular attention to the quality of the witness of their believers.

Dear Muslim Friends, once again I give you my warmest greetings on the occasion of your festival and I ask the God of Peace and Mercy to give you all, good health, serenity and prosperity.

*Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran*

*Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran*  
President

*Pier Luigi Celata*

*Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata*  
Secretary