

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

MESSAGE FOR THE END OF RAMADAN

'Id al-Fitr 1429 H. / 2008 a.d.

***Christians and Muslims:
Together for the dignity of the family***

Dear Muslim friends,

1. As the end of the month of Ramadan approaches, and following a now well-established tradition, I am pleased to send you the best wishes of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. During this month Christians close to you have shared your reflections and your family celebrations; dialogue and friendship have been strengthened. Praise be to God!

2. As in the past, this friendly *rendez-vous* also gives us an opportunity to reflect together on a mutually topical subject which will enrich our exchange and help us to get to know each other better, in our shared values as well as in our differences. This year we would like to propose the subject of the family.

3. One of the documents of the Second Council Vatican, *Gaudium et Spes*, which deals with the Church in the modern world, states: 'The well-being of the individual person and of human and Christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of that community produced by marriage and family. Hence Christians and all men who hold this community in high esteem sincerely rejoice in the various ways by which men today find help in fostering this community of love and perfecting its life, and by which parents are assisted in their lofty calling. Those who rejoice in such aids look for additional benefits from them and labour to bring them about.' (n. 47)

4. These words give us an opportune reminder that the development of both the human person and of society depends largely on the healthiness of the family! How many people carry, sometimes for the whole of their life, the weight of the wounds of a difficult or dramatic family background? How many men and women now in the abyss of drugs or violence are vainly seeking to make up for a traumatic childhood? Christians and Muslims can and must work together to safeguard the dignity of the family, today and in the future.

5. Given the high esteem in which both Muslims and Christians hold the family, we have already had many occasions, from the local to the international level, to work together in this field. The family, that place where love and life, respect for the other and hospitality are encountered and transmitted, is truly the 'fundamental cell of society.'

6. Muslims and Christians must never hesitate, not only to come to the aid of families in difficulty, but also to collaborate with all those who support the stability of the family as an institution and the exercise of parental responsibility, in particular in the field of education. I need only remind you that the family is the first school in which one learns respect for others, mindful of the identity and the difference of each one. Interreligious dialogue and the exercise of citizenship cannot but benefit from this.

7. Dear friends, now that your fast comes to an end, I hope that you, with your families and those close to you, purified and renewed by those practices dear to your religion, may know serenity and prosperity in your life! May Almighty God fill you with His Mercy and Peace!

Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran
President

Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata
Secretary