

# Message for the Islam Channel

Archbishop Kevin McDonald

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My name is Archbishop Kevin McDonald. I am a Catholic bishop and I have responsibility on behalf of the Catholic Church in this country for relations with other religions. Recently we have been living through a time of heightened stress for Christian-Muslim relations because of reactions in the Muslim world to a very provocative video about the prophet Mohammed that has been circulating on the internet. It is at times like this that it is important for good Christians and good Muslims to speak words of peace to one another and that is what I wish to do today. That is precisely what Pope Benedict was doing in his recent visit to Lebanon where he called for peaceful coexistence between religions.

For my part I would like to share with you some thoughts that were contained in the letter of greeting sent by the Vatican to Muslims throughout the world for the End of Ramadan 2012. This letter of greeting was signed by Cardinal Jean Louis Tauran, the Pope's principal advisor on interreligious matters and its message seems to me to be particularly timely.

The Cardinal highlights the important responsibility that Christians and Muslims have for the nurture and development of our young people in the world today. They are subject to so many influences, not least through all the means of electronic communication. Those influences can be positive but they can also be very dangerous. In particular, our young people can be exposed to influences that run quite counter to the values and beliefs that families and communities would wish to hand on to their young people - such as secularism, materialism, sexual license, violence and ideologies of violence. In this environment it is all the more challenging to pass on the spiritual and moral values that are the fabric of our life and culture.

The Cardinal offers a very broad vision in which he speaks about the "education of young Christians and Muslims for justice and peace, that are inseparable from truth and freedom". His letter says that all believers must strive for justice, guided by our belief that all are created by God and are called to become one family. The peace that we must strive for is not merely the absence of war but "at one and the same time a gift from God and a human endeavour to be pursued without ceasing." It is within that great vision that the letter also speaks about solidarity, about integral development and the resolution of conflict.

We all have our own part to play in this great challenge. The young people are our future: the future of Christianity and of Islam. We owe it to them to pass on the best of what we have received. Together let us strive to harness their enthusiasm and goodwill in constructing a better world.