

**PONTIFICAL COUNCIL
FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

MESSAGE FOR THE FEAST OF DEEPAVALI 2009

Christians and Hindus: Committed to Integral Human Development

Dear Hindu Friends,

1. It is my joy to greet you all, once again, in the name of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue: *a Happy Deepavali!* Religious Festivals enable us to revitalize our relationship with God and one another. May this Festival of Lights, while elevating our minds and hearts towards God, the Supreme Light, strengthen fellowship among us and bless us all with happiness and peace.
2. Honouring the tradition of this Pontifical Council to share a thought on matters of common concern, I would like to propose this year that we reflect on the need to work together for integral human development.
3. Integral human development implies the advance towards the true good of every individual, community and society, in every single dimension of human life: social, economic, political, intellectual, spiritual and religious. [Pope Paul VI](#) described it as "development of the whole man and of all men" (*Populorum Progressio*, 1967, no. 42) "from less human conditions to those which are more human" (Ibid., no.20). And [Pope Benedict XVI](#) wrote recently that "integral human development presupposes the responsible freedom of the individual and of peoples" (*Caritas in veritate*, no. 17).
4. Such authentic human development can be achieved only by assuming a shared responsibility for one another and by seriously engaging in collaborative action. This springs from our very nature as human beings and our belonging to one human family.
5. In the process of integral development, protection of human life and respect for the dignity and fundamental rights of the person, are a responsibility of everyone, both individually and collectively.
6. Respect for others therefore implies the recognition of their freedom: freedom of conscience, thought and religion. When persons feel respected in their primary choice as religious beings, only then are they able to encounter others and cooperate for the progress of humanity. This shapes a more peaceful social order conducive to development.

7. Integral human development also requires the political will to work towards ensuring greater protection of human rights and peaceful co-existence. Development, freedom and peace are inextricably linked together, and they complete one another. Lasting peace and harmonious relations emerge in an atmosphere of freedom; so also, integral human development is accomplished in an environment of peace.

Let us all, as people of good will, join together to dispel every darkness that hinders a true vision of co-existence, religious harmony and integral development for each and every person.

May *Deepavali* be an occasion to celebrate our friendship and boldly proclaim the victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and work together to bring about an era of true freedom 'for all' and integral human development 'of all'.

My best wishes, once again, for a splendid and joyous *Deepavali*.

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran
President

Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata
Secretary