



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

Greeting: Civic Gathering with People of Other Religions

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor

9 NOVEMBER 2012, DHAKA, BANGLADESH

My dear friends and welcome guests, with Archbishop Patrick, the Apostolic Nuncio and my brothers the Bishops of Bangladesh, it is my pleasure on this great day of festival to greet you all in the name of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI and to assure you of our joy and deep gratitude at your presence among us today.

It is a singular happiness to greet the Honourable Mozammel Hossain, the Chief Justice of Bangladesh who graciously represents the Government of Bangladesh. Yesterday with Archbishop Patrick and the Apostolic Nuncio I was pleased to be welcomed cordially by the President and the Prime Minister of your country; to engage in fruitful discussion with them and to convey the greetings of Pope Benedict. Honourable Chief Justice, thank you for being among us.

The Catholic Church is celebrating a 'Year of Faith' and it is our joy to greet all of you who share with us in belief in God. That belief, expressed in the great religious traditions of humanity, is a force for good in our world today. These were sentiments that I was pleased to share in more depth during my welcome visit two days ago to the Islamic Foundation.

There are sadly those who would have us believe that religion is not a force for good, and who insist that religious beliefs are divisive. We do not accept this. We know that the quest for God is rooted in the spirit of every human being and brings with it the search for holiness, goodness, compassion, forgiveness, perseverance, humility and truth.

Therefore, the Catholic Church engages willingly in Interreligious dialogue and understands that in the words of Pope John Paul II, "Dialogue is not so much an idea to be studied as a way of living in positive relationship with others"

We recognise that dialogue means living as good neighbours with those of other religions; working together in matters of common concern, especially in issues of justice and peace. I warmly commend all of you, people of religious belief and representatives of the Government and people of Bangladesh for your commitment to live in harmony with each other in this country.

In greeting you all today in the name of Pope Benedict XVI, I make my own the prayer of our Holy Father, when he received the Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Vatican in December 2009. On that occasion he said:

"I pray that Muslims, Hindus, Christians and all people of goodwill in your country will bear untiring witness to the peaceful coexistence that remains the vocation of the entire human race."

Thank you for your presence with us, and may the Almighty and Merciful God bless us all now and for ever.

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor
Archbishop Emeritus of Westminster