

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

MESSAGE TO SIKHS FOR GURU NANAK PRAKASH DIWAS 2016

To promote a culture of solidarity and sharing

Dear Sikh Friends.

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue sends you its fraternal greetings and festal felicitations as you celebrate *Guru Nanak Prakash Diwas* on 14th November this year. May the festivities of this most religiously significant day enhance peace, happiness and unity in your homes and communities!

In keeping with our healthy tradition, we wish to share with you on this occasion a few reflections on how we, both Christians and Sikhs can promote "a culture of solidarity and sharing" to overcome the "culture selfishness and indifference". The steadily growing individualistic, egoistic and intemperate tendencies among the humans in this era of globalization are gravely affecting the culture of our living together with equality, justice and peace. They, more and more, render humans immune and "incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain and feeling the need to help them" (Pope Francis. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013. no. 54).

Amidst human sufferings due to hunger, disease, oppression, exploitation, marginalization, forced migration, war and violence in many parts of the world, there have been attempts, at various levels, to bring about solace and succour, healing and development to the affected and the afflicted. But a great deal is still required both to mitigate the sufferings of people and to root out their causes in order for solidarity and sharing to become our way of being and living.

Solidarity is a sure means of building a more humane and peaceable world founded on fraternity, justice, freedom and harmony. It is a virtue that seeks the common good, of each and every individual, respectful of his/her dignity, rights and responsibilities. Persons who cultivate this virtue with conviction and commitment motivate others to endeavour to work for the wellbeing and empowerment of one and all with a sense of responsibility towards others. In this way, the culture of solidarity will get nurtured everywhere.

A genuine spirit of sharing by the more fortunate of the society towards the less fortunate ones - the poor, the suffering and the most vulnerable ones can counter human greed and selfishness that are at the very root of many of the ills affecting the society. It is worth noting here what Saint John Chrysostom, one of the Early Fathers of the Church said, "Not to share one's wealth with the poor is to steal from them and to take away their livelihood. It is not our own goods which we hold but theirs" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no.2446). May we also remember Jesus' saying that "There is more joy in giving than in receiving" (Holy Bible. Acts 20: 35).

As believers in our own respective religions with shared beliefs and convictions on the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood/sisterhood of all humans and our responsibility for others, may we, Christians and Sikhs nurture, starting from our own families and communities and lead by personal examples, a culture of solidarity, caring and sharing and make them, as Pope Francis says, "a true way of life, a rule of conduct in our relationships with one another" (*Message for XLIX World Day of Peace*. 2016) so that peace, happiness and prosperity may abound in the world!

Wish you all a happy Prakash Diwas of Guru Nanak Dev Ji!

From the Vatican, 28 October 2016

Jean Louis Cardinal Tauran
President

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Secretary