



**PONTIFICAL COUNCIL  
FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

***CHRISTIANS AND JAINS:  
JOINING HANDS TO PROMOTE FAMILIES AS SEEDBEDS OF PEACE***

**MESSAGE FOR THE FEAST OF MAHAVIR JAYANTI**

**2013**

**Vatican City**

Dear Jain Friends,

1. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue extends warm greetings and felicitations as you devoutly commemorate, on 23<sup>rd</sup> April this year, the Birth Anniversary of 'Tirthankar' Vardhaman Mahavir. May this feast fill your hearts and homes and that of your friends and well-wishers with serenity, peace and joy, strengthening a sense of belonging in your families and communities!
2. In an age characterized by increasing instances of intolerance and violence in different parts of the world, affecting the harmonious co-existence of people, occasions such as this, besides offering us, adherents of diverse religions a momentous opportunity for spiritual advancement, also remind us to practice *karuna* (compassion) and *ahimsa* (non-violence) and to reflect upon our shared responsibility in promoting peace. As members of one larger human family, we are called upon to contribute generously towards making our own families as seedbeds of peace.
3. A healthy family, as we know, is one that is built on sound spiritual and ethical values where the innate dignity of each member is affirmed and protected in an atmosphere of respect, equality, openness and love. There the members, led by the exemplary lives of parents and elders, learn how to care for and share with others, patiently bearing with one another and submitting themselves, in a spirit of solidarity, to a common code, to ensure harmonious and peaceful co-existence and the good of the family. The family is, therefore, "one of the indispensable social subjects for the achievement of a culture of peace" as it is there the "peacemakers, tomorrow's promoters of a culture of life and love are born and nurtured" (Pope Benedict XVI, *Message for the World Day of Peace, 2013*) and where everyone, particularly the young, progressively "learn to savor the genuine taste of peace" (Pope Benedict XVI, *Message for the World Day of Peace, 2008*).
4. As the primary school and agency of peace, it is the family that sets the tone for peace in the greater human family i.e., the world community. If humanity is to live in peace, needless to say, it ought to draw inspiration from values that form the bedrock of families: learning to respect the 'other' in his/her 'otherness' and working together in honesty and solidarity for the common good.

5. Unfortunately, due to the rise in the materialistic and competitive individualistic tendencies in today's globalized world, adherence to these values and principles that bind the family members into one single unit has been adversely affected threatening cohesion, cooperation and co-existence in the families and this naturally finds its echo at the macro level as well.
6. Grounded in our shared conviction that we are all brothers and sisters called to form one great human family and conscious of our moral responsibility as part of that call, may we, Christians and Jains, nurture, first of all, thoughts, words and gestures of peace in our own respective homes and secondly, joining hands with others, so as to promote families as the seedbeds of peace to build a humanity at peace.

Wishing you all A HAPPY MAHAVIR JAYANTI!

*Jean-Louis Card. Tauran*

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