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Message of Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran to the participants of the Religions for Peace European Assembly on “Welcoming Each Other in Europe: from Fear to Trust” (Castel Gandolfo, 28 October – 1 November 2015)

Here below the Message of Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to the participants of the Religions for Peace European Assembly on “Welcoming Each Other in Europe: from Fear to Trust” (Castel Gandolfo, 28 October-1 November 2015):

Message of Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran

Honourable President and Members of Religious for Peace, Respected Religious leaders, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

I extend my warm greetings and cordial best wishes to the brothers and sisters of different religious traditions and people of goodwill, gathered at Castel Gandolfo, on the occasion of the Religions for Peace European Assembly under the theme “Welcoming Each Other in Europe: from Fear to Trust”.

As you may be aware of, from 26th to 28th October, 2015, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of ***Nostra Aetate***, Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. ***Nostra Aetate*** notes that “We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God. Man’s relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: “He who does not love does not know God” (I John 4:8). It further mentions that “No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned” (NA n.5).

Accordingly, one cannot love God without loving one’s neighbor, nor one’s neighbor without loving God. But one cannot love God or one’s neighbor without knowing them, and one cannot know them without entering into communion with them. The lack of mutual trust comes from a lack of understanding. Pope Francis states that the future of Europe: depends on the recovery of the vital connection between two elements namely, the transcendent dimension of life and the “humanistic spirit”. He emphasizes that “A Europe which is no longer

open to the transcendent dimension of life is a Europe which risks slowly losing its own soul and that “humanistic spirit” which it still loves and defends” (*Address to the European Parliament*, 25 November 2014).

In the concept paper of your Assembly, you have underlined the multiple challenges of today’s Europe: fear of losing one’s identity leading to radicalism and fundamentalism, tendency to withdrawal in oneself, xenophobia, rising intolerance towards different religions and minorities, increasing tides of forced migration due to wars, dictatorial regimes and ecological crisis.

How can we change fear into trust, discrimination into respect, enmity into amity, polarization into solidarity, selfish lifestyle into selfless one, throwaway culture into caring-for culture, and confrontation into encounter and dialogue? The true mission of religion is peace because religion and peace go together. No true religious leader can ignore the culture of dehumanization and violence or preach and support it. We all agree that peace or violence and trust or fear come from the human heart. Prayer, spiritual practices, and actions for justice and peace can awaken our hearts to overcome the polarized vision of seeing our neighbor as another separate person. As religious leaders our urgent challenge today, is to transform distrust, suspicion, intolerance into a new culture based on respect, mutual understanding, non-violence, solidarity and peaceful conflict resolution. Since our spiritual patrimony is so great, let us work together to remedy these social and cultural ills through dialogue and cooperation.

Pope Francis, appeals to us to “intensify dialogue among various religions” “to build bridges connecting all people, in such a way that everyone can see in the other not an enemy, not a rival, but a brother or sister to be welcomed and embraced! (*Audience with the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See*, 22 March 2013).

With sentiments of esteem and respect, I convey to you the prayerful best wishes of His Holiness Pope Francis and his hope that the discussions and reflections of this Assembly may contribute to a new culture of encounter and friendship in Europe.

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran

President, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

Vatican City

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