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Message from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to Muslims for the month of Ramadan and 'Id al-Fitr H. 1438 H / 2017 A.D.

On the occasion of Ramadan – which began this year around 27 May – and for the feast of 'Id al-Fitr 1483 H. / 2017 A.D., which falls around 24 June, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue has sent to Muslims all around the world a message of good wishes entitled “Christians and Muslims: Caring for our Common Home”.

This is the text of the message signed by the president, His Eminence Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, and the secretary, Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, M.C.C.I.:

Text of the Message

Christians and Muslims: Caring for our Common Home

Dear Muslim Brothers and Sisters,

We wish to assure you of our prayerful solidarity during this time of fasting in the month of Ramadan and the celebration of 'Id al-Fitr that concludes it, and we extend to you our heartfelt best wishes for serenity, joy and abundant spiritual gifts.

This year's Message is especially timely and significant: fifty years ago, in 1967, only three years after the establishment of this Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) by Pope Paul VI on 19 May 1964, the first Message was sent for this occasion.

In the years that have followed, two Messages have been particularly important: the Message of 1991, during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, entitled “The Path of Believers is the Way of Peace”, and the Message of 2013, in the first year of Pope Francis' pontificate, entitled “Promoting Mutual Respect through Education”. Both Messages were signed by the Pontiffs.

Among the many activities of the PCID for promoting dialogue with Muslims, the most important and longstanding is this yearly Message for Ramadan and for 'Id al-Fitr addressed to Muslims throughout the world. To share this Message in the widest way possible, the PCID is assisted by local Catholic communities, as well as Papal Representatives present in almost every country.

The experience of both our religious communities affirms the value of this Message for promoting cordial relations between Christian and Muslim neighbours and friends, by offering insights on current and pressing issues.

For this year, the PCID offers a theme related to Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter "Laudato Si'– On Care for Our Common Home", which was addressed not only to Catholics and Christians, but to the whole of humanity.

Pope Francis draws attention to the harm our lifestyles and decisions are causing to the environment, to ourselves and to our fellow human beings. There are, for example, certain philosophical, religious, and cultural perspectives that present obstacles which threaten humanity's relationship with nature. To take up this challenge involves all of us, regardless of whether or not we profess a religious belief.

The Encyclical's title itself is expressive: the world is a "common home", a dwelling for all the members of the human family. Therefore, no one person, nation or people can impose exclusively their understanding of our planet. This is why Pope Francis appeals "for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet... , since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affects us all" (n. 14).

Pope Francis states that "the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion" (no. 217). What is needed is education, spiritual openness and a "global ecological conversion" to adequately address this challenge. As believers, our relationship with God should be increasingly shown in the way we relate to the world around us. Our vocation to be guardians of God's handiwork is not optional, nor it is tangential to our religious commitment as Christians and Muslims: it is an essential part of it.

May the religious insights and blessings that flow from fasting, prayer and good works sustain you, with God's help, on the path of peace and goodness, to care for all the members of the human family and for the whole of creation.

With these sentiments, we wish you once again serenity, joy and prosperity.

From the Vatican, 19 May 2017

Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran
President

Bishop Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, M.C.C.I.
Secretary
