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Video Message of the Holy Father on the occasion of the Second International Day of Human Fraternity (4 February)

The following is the text of the video message sent by the Holy Father Francis on the occasion of the Second International Day of Human Fraternity, held today, 4 February:

Video Message of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters,

Before all else, allow me to greet, with affection and esteem, the Grand Imam Ahmed Al-Tayyeb with whom, exactly three years ago in Abu Dhabi, I signed the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*. In these years, we have walked together as brothers in the awareness that, while respecting our individual cultures and traditions, we are called to build fraternity as a bulwark against hatred, violence and injustice.

I thank all those who have accompanied us on this path: His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed for his steadfast commitment in this regard; the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity for the various initiatives it has promoted in different parts of the world; and the General Assembly of the United Nations for its resolution of 21 December 2020, which makes it possible for us to celebrate today the Second International Day of Human Fraternity. My gratitude also extends to all the civil and religious institutions that support this noble cause.

Fraternity is one of the fundamental and universal values that ought to undergird relationships between peoples, so that the suffering or disadvantaged do not feel excluded and forgotten, but accepted and supported as part of the one human family. We are brothers and sisters!

In a mutual and shared spirit of fraternity, all of us must work to promote a culture of peace that encourages sustainable development, tolerance, inclusion, mutual understanding and solidarity.

We all live under the same heaven, independently of where and how we live, the colour of our skin, religion, social group, sex, age, economic conditions or our state of health. All of us are different yet equal, and this time of pandemic has shown that clearly. Let me say once again: *we are not saved alone!*

We all live under the same heaven and, in the name of God, we who are his creatures must acknowledge that we are brothers and sisters. As believers from different religious traditions, we have a role to play. What is that role? To help our brothers and sisters raise their eyes and their prayers to heaven. Let us raise our eyes to heaven, because whoever worships God with a sincere heart also loves his or her neighbour. Fraternity makes us open to the Father of all and enables us to see others as our brothers or sisters, to share life, to support one another and to love and come to know others.

We all live under the same heaven. Now is the fitting time to journey together, believers and all people of good will. Do not leave it to tomorrow or an uncertain future. Now is the fitting time to journey together: believers and all people of good will, together. This is a good day to extend a hand, to celebrate our unity in diversity – unity, not uniformity, unity in diversity – in order to say to the communities and societies in which we live that the time of fraternity has arrived. All together, for it is essential to live in solidarity with one another. For this reason, I repeat, now is not a time for indifference: either we are brothers and sisters, or everything falls apart. This is not to be melodramatic; it is the truth! Either we are brothers and sisters, or everything falls apart. We see this in the little wars, in this third world war now being fought piecemeal, as peoples are destroyed, as children go hungry, as their opportunities for education decline... It is destruction. Either we are brothers and sisters, or everything falls apart.

This is not a time for forgetfulness. Each day we need to remember what God said to Abram: that raising up his eyes to heaven, he would see the promise of his descendants, that is, ourselves (cf. *Interreligious Meeting at the Plain of Ur*, 6 March 2021). A promise has also been fulfilled in our lives: that of a fraternity as vast and bright as the stars of heaven!

Dear brothers and sisters, dear brother, Grand Imam!

The path of fraternity is long and challenging, it is a difficult path, yet it is the anchor of salvation for humanity. Let us counter the many threatening signs, times of darkness and mindsets of conflict with the sign of fraternity that, in accepting others and respecting their identity, invites them to a shared journey. Not all the same, but as brothers and sisters, each with his or her own personality, his or her uniqueness.

I thank all those who act in the conviction that we can live in harmony and peace, conscious of the need for a more fraternal world, inasmuch as all of us are creatures of God: brothers and sisters.

I thank all those who will join our journey of fraternity. I encourage everyone to be committed to the cause of peace and to respond concretely to the problems and needs of the least, the poor and the defenseless. Our resolve is to walk side by side, "brothers and sisters all", in order to be effective artisans of peace and justice, in the harmony of differences and with respect for the identity of each. Sisters and brothers, let us press forward on this path of fraternity! Thank you.