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Audience of the Holy Father with participants in the Colloquium between the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue and the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, “Creative Commonalities between Christianity and Islam”

This morning the Holy Father Francis received in audience the participants in the sixth Colloquium between the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue and the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies on the theme: “Creative Commonalities between Christianity and Islam”.

The following is the Pope’s address to those present at the meeting:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Your Eminence, thank you for your words. Your Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal, dear brothers and sisters!

To welcome you on the occasion of your Colloquium is a cause for joy for me. The fact that you are meeting for the sixth time shows perseverance in the journey of interfaith and intercultural dialogue, and it is also a demonstration of a faithful friendship that continues despite the turnover of persons and responsibilities. Indeed, each of us is like the link in a long chain: many people have preceded us on the beautiful and challenging road of encounter and friendship, others will follow us, as we hope and pray, confirming that feeling of brotherhood that is the bedrock of relations between peoples.

I wish to express appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty the King Abdullah II of Jordan, for his attention to the Christian communities not only in his country, but also those of the Middle East, especially in times marked by conflicts and violence. His Majesty does not tire of repeating that the Christians of those blessed lands are natives, meaning they live where their ancestors lived for long centuries.

The Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, under the enlightened leadership of Prince El Hassan bin Talal, has among its main objectives the preservation and enhancement of the Arab Christian heritage. In this regard, I can but express further gratitude, because this not only benefits the Christian citizens of yesterday and today, but also protects and consolidates this heritage throughout the Middle East, so diverse and rich in ethnicities, religions, cultures, languages and traditions. It is indeed a matter of jealously preserving each piece of this beautiful mosaic. It would also be desirable, where possible, to cooperate closely with Christian institutes that have the same noble objective.

The dialogue you practice and promote, if it is to be fruitful, requires a style of sincerity and mutual respect, in the awareness of both convergences and divergences. It is on the former that we must focus above all, that is, what unites us on a religious and spiritual level as on an ethical-moral level. In this sense, you propose to highlight many common values, such as the worship of a single God, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, compassion, sharing, care for the disadvantaged and the suffering: the orphan, the widow, the sick, the elderly, the immigrant, the refugee. We also believe that everything does not end with death, but that there is another life, eternal, where we will give account to God for our actions and we will receive recompense or punishment. Therefore, our common commitment is for a good life, that gives glory to God and joy to those we meet on our earthly pilgrimage. And I do not want to leave without saying a word. I met the ambassador, who reminded me of the tragedy of Turkey and the north of Syria. Our heart too is close to the many people who have suffered as a result of this terrible earthquake. Let us pray for them, and do our best to help them. There are Muslims, Christians, our brothers and sisters.

Dear friends, thank you for this meeting. May God bless you and sustain your efforts to work for a world where all can live as brothers and sisters, in peace, safety and dignity. Please, pray for me too. Thank you.
