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Message from the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue to Hindus on the occasion of the feast of Deepavali 2022

The festival of Diwali is celebrated by all Hindus and is known as Deepavali or “row of oil lamps”. Symbolically based on ancient mythology, it represents the victory of truth over falsehood, of light over darkness, of life over death, of good over evil.

The actual celebration lasts three days, marking the beginning of a new year, family reconciliation, especially between brothers and sisters, and worship of God.

This year the festival will be celebrated by many Hindus on 24 October.

On this occasion, the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue has sent them a message on the theme: “*Christians and Hindus: Together promoting conviviality and co-responsibility*”.

The following is the full text of the message:

Message

Christians and Hindus:

Together promoting conviviality and co-responsibility

Dear Hindu Friends,

The Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, hitherto known as Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, sends you its joyous greetings and best wishes on the occasion of Deepavali, celebrated this year on October 24. May this festival of lights give you the grace and happiness to enkindle, besides yours, the lives of everyone in your

families, communities and in the larger society!

Growing instances of tensions, conflicts and violence in different parts of the world on the basis of religious, cultural, ethnic, racial and linguistic identities and supremacies - oft fuelled by competitive, populist and expansionist politics, as also by majoritarian and minoritarian movements and blatant misuse of social media - are a cause of concern to all of us, since they grossly affect the fraternal and peaceful co-existence in society. In this context, the need to promote conviviality and a spirit of co-responsibility among people becomes vital and pivotal. In keeping with our cherished tradition, we wish to share with you on this occasion, therefore, some thoughts on how we, Christians and Hindus, can together promote conviviality and co-responsibility for the good of each and every one.

Conviviality is both the quality of being friendly and lively and the ability to live in the midst of others with their individualities, diversities and differences in a spirit of respect, love and trust. It is the act and art of forging friendly and fraternal, healthy and harmonious relationships among human beings on the one hand, and between them and nature, on the other; and it is built on a daily basis, through personal encounters and dialogue, in mutual listening and learning, with patience and perseverance, and with the conviction that "Life exists where there is bonding, communion, fraternity" (Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* - On Fraternity and Social Friendship, 2020, no.87).

Promotion of conviviality, however, entails assuming responsibility on our part to care for one another and creation. It calls for a readiness to walk and work together with charity, fraternity and sense of co-responsibility for the common good. Besides being responsible contributors in our own possible ways to the common good, it is also necessary that we make people around us responsible to make conviviality a reality by respecting the transcendental dignity of every human person and his or her legitimate rights flowing from thereof, working for the social well-being and sustainable development of all, and committing oneself to the harmonious living with everyone and nature. While on this path towards conviviality, we may face many challenges owing to the largely dominant indifference and individualism prevalent in our society today, we, as believers, are not to give into pessimism but rather stay united and act as examples for others to emulate.

Like the families, led by the examples of parents and elders, have a preeminent role in inculcating in their children and youngsters these noble values of conviviality and co-responsibility, the family of religious leaders and groups of all religions across the globe, educational institutions, means of communications, governmental and non-governmental organizations also have a shared responsibility in nurturing values of conviviality and co-responsibility, using all available means at their disposal. Moreover, interreligious dialogue which according to Pope Francis, is "a providential sign" of our times and a "privileged path to the growth of fraternity and peace in the world" (*Greetings to the Delegates of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations*, 30 June, 2022) is and can be a powerful means of inspiring and even challenging the people of diverse religious traditions, to live these values in fraternity, unity and solidarity for the common good.

As believers and leaders of our religious communities who are grounded in our own respective religious beliefs and convictions, and with a common concern and responsibility for the welfare of human family and of the earth-our common home, may we, Christians and Hindus, joining hands with those of all other religious traditions and people of good will, promote, individually and collectively, the spirit of conviviality and co-responsibility to transform this world into a secure home for everyone to live in with peace and joy!

Wishing you all a Happy Deepavali!

Miguel Ángel Cardinal Ayuso Guixot, MCCJ

Prefect

Msgr. Indunil Janakaratne Kodithuwakku Kankanamalage

Secretary
