



DICASTERY FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

*Christians and Sikhs: Promoting Inter-Religious Solidarity for the
Common Good*

MESSAGE FOR GURU NANAK PRAKASH DIWAS
2022

Vatican City

Dear Sikh Friends,

The Dicastery for Inter-Religious Dialogue, until recently known as the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, offers festal greetings and wishes to all of you, as you celebrate the Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji on 8 November this year. May your celebrations strengthen the bonds of love and unity in your families and communities, and fill you with joy and peace!

While we move on with hope as global community desiring a complete relief from coronavirus related concerns, occurrence of aggressions, tensions and violence in different parts of the world, almost on a daily basis, and the widespread poverty and inequality, exclusion and marginalization in society continue to threaten the prospect of a happy, harmonious and peaceful living together of people. Besides, a rapid growth among the masses of those inured and indifferent to the needs and sufferings of fellow beings proves to be a stumbling block in finding solutions to problems affecting humanity. In this context, we wish to share with you some thoughts on how we, believers, in particular, both the Sikhs and Christians, can promote interreligious solidarity for the good of all of us.

‘Solidarity’ stems from mutual dependency of all human beings and therefore entails mutual responsibility for one another. It manifests that we are ‘all brothers’ in concrete ways: reaching out to brothers and sisters in need, offering succour and care, joining hands for a cause, etc. It profoundly displays “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual” (Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 1987, no.38). Promotion of solidarity thus involves seeking the good of all, respecting the dignity and identity of all, irrespective of legitimate differences, and taking moral responsibility for the well-being of all. Moreover, solidarity as sharing of material, spiritual, natural and human resources with others often entails sacrifices that showcase the best of our humanness, goodness and religiousness.

It is heartening to note that there is a growing awareness among people about the need for solidarity so as to support one another and to collectively take on issues facing them in society. The kind of human solidarity including interreligious solidarity witnessed on the ground in recent times, be it during disasters and emergencies or on matters quite critical for the welfare of society, commendably testifies it. Solidarity in general and its particular expressions need to be carefully sustained at the local, national and international levels, making it a movement and culture that favours and protects the common good. Interreligious solidarity, in particular, needs a nurturing and strengthening with a spirit that “seeks to build up rather than to destroy, to unite rather than to divide” (Saint John Paul II, Message for the World Day of Peace, 1987).

Promotion of interreligious solidarity for the common good must earnestly begin from families - the first and fundamental schools of social living - where members, led by the

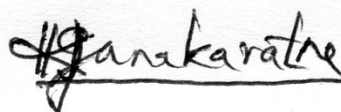
example of grandparents, parents and elders, learn values that build solidarity for the good of all in the family, despite conceivable differences among them. Besides, education and formation are key areas whereby students can be taught to imbibe the spirit of solidarity and of 'unity in diversity', by inspiring and encouraging them, to do gestures and acts of solidarity, in creative ways, in the neighbourhoods and in the wider society. Since the common minimum invitation that religions send out to their adherents is to be good persons and to work for the good of all persons, interreligious solidarity can be promoted by religions and religious leaders with great ease and effort. Interreligious solidarity is a matter of utmost importance and holds the key to ensuring the common good for all times, present and ahead.

As believers grounded in our own respective religious beliefs and convictions and as persons with shared values and concerns about the good of the society, may we, Christians and Sikhs, joining hands with people of other religious traditions and of good will, do all that we can individually and collectively, with a sense of responsibility for one another and for creation, to promote a culture of interreligious solidarity, a culture which according to Pope Francis sees others "not as rivals or statistics, but as brothers and sisters" (Address to the community of Varginha (Manguinhos), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 25 July 2013)!

Wish you all a Happy Guru Nanak Prakash Diwas!



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Prefect



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