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Video Message of the Holy Father for the Third International Day of Human Fraternity and the presentation of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity

The following is the text of the video message sent by the Holy Father Francis on the occasion of the Third International Day of Human Fraternity and the presentation of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity, taking place today, 4 February, broadcast during the ceremony for the conferral of the Zayed Award 2023, inspired by the Document on Human Fraternity:

Video Message of the Holy Father Dear sisters and dear brothers, good morning!

I greet with affection and esteem the Grand Imam Ahmed Al-Tayyeb, with whom, exactly four years ago in Abu Dhabi, I signed the *Document on Human Fraternity for world peace and living together*.

I thank His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed for his commitment to the path of fraternity; the High Committee for Human Fraternity for the initiatives promoted in various parts of the world; and I also thank the United Nations General Assembly which, by the Resolution of December 2020, established 4 February as International Day of Human Fraternity. I am also pleased to be associated with the commendable initiative of conferring the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity 2023.

In sharing sentiments of fraternity with each other, we are required to become promoters of a culture of peace that encourages dialogue, mutual understanding, solidarity, sustainable development and inclusion. We all bear in our heart the desire to live as brothers and sisters, in mutual assistance and harmony. The fact that this often does not occur – and, unfortunately, we have dramatic signs of this – should further stimulate the search for fraternity.

It is true that religions do not have the political force to impose peace, but, by transforming man from within, inviting him to detach himself from evil, they guide him towards an attitude of peace. Religions therefore have a decisive responsibility in the coexistence of peoples: their dialogue weaves a peaceful web, repels temptations to lacerate the civil fabric, and frees one from the instrumentalization of religious differences for political ends.

Also relevant is the task of religions in reminding us that man's destiny goes beyond earthly goods and lies in a universal horizon, because every human person is a creature of God: from God we all come and to God we all return.

Religions, in order to be at the service of fraternity, need to engage in dialogue with each other, to get to know each other, to enrich each other, and above all to develop that which unites and to collaborate for the good of all.

The various religious traditions, each one drawing from its own spiritual heritage, can make a great contribution in the service of fraternity. If we are able to show that it is possible to live difference in fraternity, little by little we can free ourselves from fear and mistrust of the other who is different from us. Cultivating diversity and harmonizing differences is not a simple process, but it is the only way to guarantee a solid and lasting peace; it is a commitment that requires us to strengthen our capacity for dialogue with others.

Men and women of different religions walk towards God along roads that increasingly intertwine. Every encounter can be an opportunity to oppose one another or, with God's help, to encourage each other to go forward as brothers and sisters. Indeed, we share not only a common origin and descent, but also a common destiny, that of fragile and vulnerable creatures, as the historical period we are living shows us so clearly.

Dear brothers and dear sisters,

We are aware that the path of fraternity is a long and difficult one. We counter the many conflicts, in the shadows of a closed world, with the sign of fraternity! It urges us to accept others and to respect their identity; it inspires us to work in the conviction that it is possible to live in harmony and in peace.

I thank all those who join our journey of fraternity, and I encourage them to commit themselves to the cause of peace and to respond to the real problems and needs of the last, the poor, the defenceless, those who need our help.

And the Zayed Prize for Human Fraternity goes in this direction. Thank you so much, thank you so much for this...this session of yours with this year's award which is...in which the Sant'Egidio Community and Mrs. Shamsa Abubakar Fadhil were awarded. Thank you very much for your work, for your witness.

And to all of you, dear brothers and sisters, my greeting and my blessing.
