



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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Audience with participants in the Conference on the centenary of the first “All Religions’ Conference”

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the participants in the Conference on the centenary of the first “All Religions’ Conference” organized by Sree Narayana Guru (1856-1928).

The following is the Holy Father’s address to those present at the audience:

Address of the Holy Father

*Respected Swamis of Sivagiri Mutt and followers of Sree Narayana Guru,
Dear Friends,*

I am happy to welcome all of you, belonging to diverse religious traditions, who have come from Kerala, India, and from other parts of the world to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the first “All Religions’ Conference” organized by the spiritual leader and social reformer Sree Narayana Guru. I am pleased to know that you will be taking part in an Interreligious Conference organized – with the support of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue – to commemorate this important event in the history of interreligious dialogue in India and in Asia. The theme chosen for the Conference, “*Religions Together for a Better Humanity*”, is indeed quite relevant and important for our times.

Sree Narayana Guru dedicated his life to promoting a social and religious awakening by his clear message that all human beings, regardless of their ethnicity or their religious and cultural traditions, are members of the single human family. He insisted that there should be no discrimination against anyone in any way and at any level. His message is pertinent to our world today, where we witness growing instances of intolerance and hatred between peoples and nations. Sadly, displays of discrimination and exclusion, tensions and violence based differences of ethnic or social origin, race, colour, language and religion are a daily experience of many individuals and communities, most especially among the poor, the powerless and those without a voice.

In the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* which I signed along with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, we stated that God “has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and has called them to live together as brothers and sisters” (Abu Dhabi, 4 February 2019). All religions teach the fundamental truth that as children of one God we must love and honour one another, respect diversities and differences in a spirit of fraternity and inclusion, and take care of each other and the earth, our common home. Failure to follow the noble teachings of religions is one of the causes responsible for the troubled situation in which our world finds itself today. Our contemporaries will rediscover the value of the lofty teachings of religious traditions only if we all strive to live by them and to cultivate fraternal and friendly relationships with everyone, with the sole aim of strengthening unity amid diversity, ensuring harmonious coexistence amid differences, and being peacemakers despite the difficulties and challenges we are bound to face.

As followers of our respective religious traditions, we ought always to cooperate with all people of good will in promoting “a culture of respect, dignity, compassion, reconciliation and fraternal solidarity” (*Joint Declaration of Istiqlal*, 5 September 2024). In this way, we can help to defeat the culture of individualism, exclusion, indifference and violence that sadly is spreading. Drawing from the spiritual truths and values that we have in common, yet firmly rooted in and committed to our own religious beliefs and convictions, may we walk together and work together to build a better humanity!

Dear friends, I thank you for your presence and for your commitment to dialogue and understanding between the followers of the different religions. In assuring you of my prayers, I would ask you, please, to remember me in your own.
