

Christians and Hindus to nurture a "culture of inclusion" against the "globalisation of indifference"

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue has addressed a message to the world's Hindu community for the festival of Diwali, a celebration that marks the victory of truth over falsehood, light over darkness, life over death, and good over evil. Globalisation has made people more self-absorbed and accustomed to the suffering of others.

Vatican City (AsiaNews, 20 October 2014) - In its message for the Hindu festival of Diwali, which this year falls on 23 October, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue noted that whilst globalisation has opened up new avenues for development in the world, at the same time, it "has contributed to the fragmentation of society," the spread of materialism and consumerism, making "people more self-absorbed, power-hungry and indifferent to the rights, needs and sufferings of others". In religious matters, relativism and syncretism have grown.



Faced with increasing discrimination, violence and exclusion, "Nurturing a culture of inclusion becomes a common call and a shared responsibility" that should unite Hindus and Christians to other

religions of the world and people of good will.

Symbolically based on ancient mythology, Diwali represents the victory of truth over falsehood, of light over darkness, of life over death, of good over evil. The celebrations last three days and mark the beginning of a new year, a time for family reconciliation, especially among brothers and sisters, and adoration of the Divine.

"We wish to reflect with you this year on the theme of 'Fostering together a culture of inclusion'," wrote Card Jean-Louis Tauran and Fr Guixot Miguel Ángel Ayuso, respectively president and secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. "In the face of increasing discrimination, violence and exclusion throughout the world, 'nurturing a culture of inclusion' can be rightly seen as one of the most genuine aspirations of people everywhere.

"It is true that globalisation has opened many new frontiers and provided fresh opportunities to develop, among other things, better educational and healthcare facilities. It has ushered in a greater awareness of democracy and social justice in the world, and our planet has truly become a 'global village' due in large part to modern means of communication and transportation. It can also be said, however, that globalisation has not achieved its primary objective of integrating local peoples into the global community. Rather, globalisation has contributed significantly to many peoples losing their sociocultural, economic and political identities.

"The negative effects of globalisation have also had an impact on religious communities throughout the world since they are intimately related to surrounding cultures. In fact, globalisation has contributed to the fragmentation of society and to an increase in relativism and syncretism in religious matters, as well as bringing about a privatization of religion. Religious fundamentalism and ethnic, tribal and sectarian violence in different parts of the world today are largely manifestations of the discontent, uncertainty and insecurity among peoples, particularly the poor and marginalized who have been excluded from the benefits of globalisation.

"The negative consequences of globalisation, such as widespread materialism and consumerism, moreover, have made people more self-absorbed, power-hungry and indifferent to the rights, needs and sufferings of others. This, in the words of Pope Francis, has led to a "'globalisation of indifference' which makes us slowly inured to the suffering of others and closed in on ourselves" (*Message for the World Day of Peace, 2014*).

"Such indifference gives rise to a 'culture of exclusion' (cf. Pope Francis, *Address to the Apostolic Movement of the Blind and the Little Mission for the Deaf and Mute, 29 March 2014*) in which the poor, marginalized and vulnerable are denied their rights, as well as the opportunities and resources that are available to other members of society. They are treated as insignificant, dispensable, burdensome, unnecessary, to be used and even discarded like objects. In various ways, the exploitation of children and women, the neglect of the elderly, sick, differently abled, migrants and refugees, and the persecution of minorities are sure indicators of this culture of exclusion.

"Nurturing a culture of inclusion thus becomes a common call and a shared responsibility, which must be urgently undertaken. It is a project involving those who care for the health and survival of the human family here on earth and which needs to be carried out amidst, and in spite of, the forces that perpetuate the culture of exclusion."