



PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR  
INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

*Christians and Hindus:  
Together to foster a culture of "inclusion"*

MESSAGE FOR THE FEAST OF DEEPAVALI  
2014

Vatican City

Dear Hindu Friends,

1. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue joyfully greets all of you on the festive occasion of Deepavali, celebrated on 23 October this year. May the Transcendent Light illumine your hearts, homes and communities, and may all your celebrations deepen the sense of belonging to one another in your families and neighbourhoods, and so further harmony and happiness, peace and prosperity.

2. We wish to reflect with you this year on the theme "Fostering together a culture of 'inclusion'". 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.

3. It is true that globalization 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 globalization has not achieved its primary objective of integrating local peoples into the global community. Rather, globalization has contributed significantly to many peoples losing their sociocultural, economic and political identities.

4. The negative effects of globalization have also had an impact on religious communities throughout the world since they are intimately related to surrounding cultures. In fact, globalization 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 globalization.

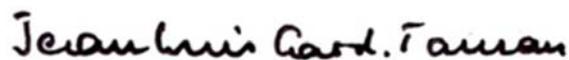
5. The negative consequences of globalization, such as widespread materialism and consumerism, moreover, have made people more self-absorbed, power-hungry and indifferent to the rights, needs and sufferings of others. This, in the words of Pope Francis, has led to a "'globalization of indifference' which 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.

6. 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.

7. As people grounded in our own respective religious traditions and with shared convictions, may we, Hindus and Christians, join together with followers of other religions and with people of good will to foster a culture of inclusion for a just and peaceful society.

We wish you all a Happy *Deepavali*!



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