



Religions at the service of humanity in our world

All religions proclaim a message of peace. At the same time, all of them, including Buddhism and Christianity, have a long, painful history of violence, leading some to believe that religion is harmful to society. Christianity, too, has a shameful history of religious wars, forced proselytization and discrimination against dissenters. Religion has a great potential to contribute to peace as well as a tendency to legitimise violence. Pope Francis reminds us of the basis of a lived fraternity: the awareness that all human beings are children of the same Father. Above all, the Second Vatican Council encouraged Christians to value other religions and to enter into a fruitful dialogue with them. The Pope recalls personalities from all religions who have worked non-violently for universal brotherhood, such as Francis of Assisi, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu and Charles de Foucauld. He quotes extensively the 'Document of Fraternity' written recently by him and the Grand Imam Al-Tayyib. Pope Francis pleads for religious freedom as a condition for peaceful coexistence between religions.

Quotes

- **The Church esteems** the ways in which God works in **other religions** and rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for their manner of life and conduct, their precepts and doctrines which... often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women. *Fratelli Tutti 277*
- God does not see with his eyes, **God sees with his heart**. And God's love is the same for everyone, regardless of religion. Even if they are atheists, his love is the same. When the last day comes, and there is sufficient light to see things as they really are, we are going to find ourselves quite surprised. *FT 281*
- **Sincere and humble worship of God** bears fruit not in discrimination, hatred and violence, but in respect for the sacredness of life, respect for the dignity and freedom of others, and loving commitment to the welfare of all. *Fratelli tutti 283*
- In these pages of reflection on universal fraternity, I felt inspired particularly by Saint **Francis of Assisi**, but also by others of our brothers and sisters who are not Catholics: **Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Mahatma Gandhi** and many more. Yet I would like to conclude by mentioning another person of deep faith who, drawing upon his intense experience of God, made a journey of transformation towards feeling a brother to all. I am speaking of Blessed **Charles de Foucauld**. *Fratelli tutti 286*
- In my fraternal **meeting with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb**, we resolutely [declared] that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood. These tragic realities are the consequence of a deviation from religious teachings. They result from a political manipulation of religions and from interpretations made by religious groups who, in the course of history, have taken advantage of the power of religious sentiment in the hearts of men and women. God, the Almighty, has no need to be defended by anyone and does not want his name to be used to terrorize people. *Fratelli tutti 285*
- One **fundamental human right** must not be forgotten in the journey towards fraternity and peace. It is **religious freedom** for believers of all religions. That freedom proclaims that we can build harmony and understanding between different cultures and religions. It also testifies to the fact that, since the important things we share are so many, it is possible to find a means of serene, ordered and peaceful coexistence, accepting our differences and rejoicing that, as children of the one God, we are all brothers and sisters. *Fratelli tutti 279*

Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty, reflected in all the peoples of the earth, so that we may discover anew that all are important and all are necessary, different faces of the one humanity that God so loves. *Fratelli Tutti*