



PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM
PRO
DIALOGO INTER RELIGIONES
N. 219/10

15 March 2010

Dear Jain Friends,

Greetings of peace and well-being from the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, the office of His Holiness the Pope for relations with people of different religious traditions, as you commemorate the important feast of the Anniversary of the Birth of 'Tirthankar' Mahavir on March 28 this year.

Occasions such as this are opportune for us both Christians and Jains to renew bonds of friendship and enhance our collaboration towards promoting harmony both among people and with nature for the cause of peace in the world.

Global peace, as we are aware of, is endangered today not only by war, arms race, rise of religious fundamentalism and terrorism, but also by a lack of 'due respect for nature' that has resulted in the current serious 'ecological crisis', and 'environmental degradation'. This worrisome reality prompted Pope Benedict XVI to exhort the world: "if you want to cultivate peace, protect creation" (*Message for the World Day of Peace 2010*).


We human beings share a profound relationship with nature. Moreover, as the acme of the existential order, we have a huge responsibility to protect and preserve nature. The future of humankind will largely depend on how well we carry out this responsibility now. But as we know, the greed and selfishness of people - both individual and collective, has led to the ecological imbalance that we are confronted with today. It is our moral duty to collectively strive for the promotion of respect for nature and restoration of healthy environment.

Integral development of individuals and of humanity as a whole is possible only in an environment where there is respect and reverence for life and when earth, water and air are treated as 'a common heritage', meant for everyone and not just a privileged few with vested interests. Preservation and conservation of the environment has therefore, become "essential for the pacific co-existence of mankind" (*Ibid*).

Both the Christian and Jain religious traditions recognize the sacred dimension of life and the dignity of human persons. While we firmly adhere to our own respective religious traditions, may we give, by word and deed, witness to our common aspiration for a healthy 'world for all' and may we further our collaboration to promote ecological consciousness to protect life and nature in order to cultivate peace.

Invoking God's blessings upon you and wishing you A HAPPY MAHAVIR JAYANTI!


Jean-Louis Cardinal TAURAN
President


Archbishop Pier Luigi CELATA
Secretary