



PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR  
INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

*Christians and Jains:  
to promote fraternity, the foundation of peace*

MESSAGE FOR MAHAVIR JAYANTI  
2014

**Vatican City**

Dear Jain Friends,

1. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue most cordially extends its greetings of peace and well-being to you as you commemorate the Birth Anniversary of ‘Tirthankar’ (Path-Finder) Vardhaman Mahavir on 13th April. May the festive occasion of *Mahavir Jayanti* strengthen more and more the bonds of fraternity and fellowship among us, and enhance the spirit of joy in your families and communities!

2. In keeping with our cherished practice, we wish to share with you, on this occasion, some reflections on fraternity as the foundation of peace. When we reflect on fraternity, our thoughts are firstly directed to the institution of family. We would all agree that family is the first school of fraternity wherein its members belonging to different generations and with varying temperaments attitudes and perspectives, get inculcated in the spirit of mutual sharing, service and self-giving in view of ensuring the well-being of all. Such foundation of fraternity in the family facilitates and favours a more peaceful and harmonious living in the society which all people across the globe long for. Experience also teaches us that consolidation of true fraternity within the family correspondingly paves the way for cultivating it among people living in a pluralistic society. This conviction was clearly emphasised by Pope Francis when he said that family is “the wellspring of all fraternity and as such it is the foundation and the first pathway to peace” (*Message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace, 2014*).

3. In every generation, age and epoch, the religious traditions have the calling to act as channels that promote fraternity both within the families and the wider society. In the present context, religions carry the more compelling onus of building peace on the bedrock of fraternity for the good of humanity. Truly, the ever increasing individualistic, egocentric and materialistic tendencies in our globalized world have not only painstakingly affected the otherwise closely woven familial and community relationships but also, as witnessed in many instances, rendered families and communities divided and wounded.

4. In the face of a culture of individual well-being threatening to replace the culture of well-being and development of all, our contemporary situation registers a reduction in the sense of responsibility towards the needy brethren as well as in fraternal relationships the world over. In recent years, the alarming surge of discrimination, persecution and violence in different parts of the globe, especially in the name of religion, is a sign of the time summoning us all to act to sow the seed of cordiality and fraternity among the practitioners of different religions in

order for us to harvest its fruits of peace and harmony in the world, our one and only common habitat.

5. Pope Francis is eager to recall that “The many situations of inequality, poverty and injustice are signs not only of a profound lack of fraternity, but also of the abuse of a culture of solidarity,” and in the light of this, he makes it clear to all that “without fraternity it is impossible to build a just society and a solid and lasting peace” (Pope Francis, *Message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace*, 2014). The present situation therefore calls for a rediscovery and renewal of fraternal relationships, responsibility and cooperation both in families and communities so to build a solid fabric of fraternal, just and peaceful co-living.

6. As believers grounded in our own respective religions and as persons with the shared conviction of being interrelated and interdependent, may we Christians and Jains, conscious of our co-responsibility towards society, join hands with people of other religious persuasions and of good will, to promote fraternity everywhere!

Wishing you all A HAPPY MAHAVIR JAYANTI!



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