

# G-8's Religious Leaders Look at Underlying "Power"

## Parallel Summit Considers Different Dimension of Same Problems

ROME, JUNE 16, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Leading up to the Group of Eight meeting next month in Italy, religious leaders from the eight nations have started their own summit to consider religious dimensions of the same problems to be considered by the G-8.

The July 8-10 G-8 meeting will be held in L'Aquila, Italy. The religious leaders started their own fourth conference today in Rome; it is becoming customary to hold a parallel religious summit to the G-8 meeting.

The more than 80 religious leaders aim to produce a summary document and proposals to present to the host country and the political assembly.

The president of the Italian episcopal conference's ecumenism and interreligious dialogue committee spoke at the presentation of the meeting in the offices of Vatican Radio.

Bishop Vincenzo Paglia explained that "the religious dimension is essential for development, coexistence and for peace among populations."

The two-day summit will take up some of the G-8's main issues for 2009, including the availability of water, the right to food, health, education, peace and security. They will dedicate special attention to Africa and to the situation of the global economy.

"Religious 'power,'" Bishop Paglia said, "is not an exterior 'power,' but rather totally interior because it is based in hearts, in those spiritual forces that lie behind history, but without it, the other powers run the risk of being founded on sand."

The religious summit began with a visit to L'Aquila, which was affected by an earthquake last April. The participants were to be received today by Italian President Giorgio Napolitano.

His Beatitude Abuna Paulos, patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia, was to inaugurate the event. Other participants include Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue; Andrea Riccardi, founder of the Sant'Egidio Community; His Beatitude Aram I, catholicos of Cilicia of the Armenians; the former chief rabbi of the Israeli defense forces, Mordechai Piron; the grand mufti of Sarajevo, Mustafa Ceric; and the president of the Japanese lay Buddhist movement Risshō Kōsei Kai, Nichiko Niwano.

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