

ZE09120102 - 2009-12-01

Permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-27709?l=english>

3 CHALLENGES FOR MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS

Dialogue Council President: Future Must be Shared

VILLEURBANNE, France, DEC. 1, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The president of the Vatican's council for interreligious dialogue says there are three challenges shared by Muslims and Christians alike.

Believers of both faiths approach the table of dialogue with three necessities, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran said at a Nov. 17 conference in France.

Cardinal Tauran's list is made up of the "challenge of identity" (to know and accept what we ourselves are); the "challenge of otherness" (taking our differences as a source of enrichment); and the "challenge of sincerity" (being firm in proposing one's own faith, but within the limits of respect for the dignity of every human being).

The president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue proposed that interreligious dialogue "is based on a relationship of trust between faithful of different religions in order to know each another, to be mutually enriched and to reflect on how to cooperate together for the common good."

"This does not imply giving up one's faith," he said. "It implies allowing oneself to be questioned by another's convictions, to be willing to take into consideration arguments that are different to one's own or those of one's community."

The cardinal acknowledged that there are many conditions for "fruitful interreligious dialogue." Among them, he noted, are clarity regarding one's own religious beliefs, humility in admitting the errors of past and present, the recognition of values in the other, and sharing values held in common.

In interreligious dialogue, the prelate clarified, "there is no break with one's faith, which

implies knowledge of one's tradition."

"Dialogue is not a strategy or a means to convert, though dialogue might foster conversion," he continued. "To be sincere, dialogue must be carried out without ulterior motives."

Common contribution

The French cardinal stated that the "reflections, meetings and initiatives" of Christians and Muslims "are an especially positive contribution for our societies, which are often organized without God and at times against him."

"Believers can offer their fellow human beings, in particular leaders of society, values that can contribute to the harmony of spirits, to the meeting of cultures and to the preservation of the common good," he contended.

He recognized that there are obstacles in Christian-Muslim cooperation, pointing out in particular Muslim leaders who oppose the possibility of changing religions in fidelity to one's conscience.

Additionally, the cardinal noted, the climate of dialogue progressing among scholars and religious leaders "has not yet penetrated" to the base of society.

"But I am convinced that we must continue to meet, to listen, to understand and to propose concrete and modest ways that can open the way at the same time to more concrete and profound debates," he said. "The history of religions teaches that there is only one future possible: a shared future."