



ENDING POVERTY: A JOINT MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN CAUSE

Vatican's Message for End of Ramadan Invites Cooperation

VATICAN CITY, SEPT. 11, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Muslims and Christians should be united in overcoming poverty, since impoverishment is something addressed in precepts held dear by people of both faiths, according to the Holy See.

In a message released today for the end of the month of Ramadan, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue encouraged Muslims and Christians to unite in this common goal. The message was signed by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran and Archbishop Pier Celata, president and secretary of the council, respectively.

"We all know that poverty has the power to humiliate and to engender intolerable sufferings; it is often a source of isolation, anger, even hatred and the desire for revenge," the Vatican document observed.

The statement goes on to assert that poverty "can provoke hostile actions using any available means, even seeking to justify them on religious grounds, or seizing another man's wealth, together with his peace and security, in the name of an alleged 'divine justice.'"

This is what makes "tackling poverty" a necessity in confronting "the phenomena of extremism and violence," the message affirmed.

Embrace and combat

The pontifical council document referenced Benedict XVI's message for this year's World Day of Peace in affirming that there is a poverty to be rejected and a poverty to be embraced.

"The poverty to be combated is before the eyes of everyone," the message explained:

"hunger, lack of clean water, limited medical care and inadequate shelter, insufficient educational and cultural systems, illiteracy, not to mention also the existence of new forms of poverty [...] marginalization, as well as affective, moral and spiritual poverty."

But the poverty that should be embraced, the statement noted, involves a "style of life which is simple and essential, avoiding waste and respecting the environment and the goodness of creation."

"This poverty can also be, at least at certain times during the year, that of frugality and fasting," the message added. "It is the poverty which we choose which predisposes us to go beyond ourselves, expanding the heart."

In this context, Cardinal Tauran and Archbishop Celata conclude by expressing an invitation:

"The poor question us, they challenge us, but above all they invite us to cooperate in a noble cause: overcoming poverty!"