

POPE: DIALOGUE A KEY ELEMENT TO LASTING PEACE

Says It Promotes Trust, Harmony Among Peoples

NICOSIA, Cyprus, JUNE 5, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI explained to the small Catholic community in Cyprus today that interreligious dialogue is a necessary element for lasting peace as it promotes trust and harmony among peoples of various religions, cultures and nations.

The Pope said this at an encounter with leaders of the Catholic community at the Maronite school St. Maron in Nicosia. Catholics account for only 3.15% of the entire population (800,000) of Cyprus.

"On this historic occasion of the first visit of the Bishop of Rome to Cyprus, I come to confirm you in your faith in Jesus Christ and to encourage you to remain of one heart and one soul in fidelity to the apostolic tradition," the Holy Father began. "As the Successor of Peter, I stand among you today to offer you the assurance of my support, my affectionate prayers and my encouragement."

The Pontiff then pointed to an "essential part of our Church's life and mission, namely the search for greater unity in charity with other Christians and dialogue with those who are not Christians."

He continued: "Especially since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has been committed to advancing along the path of greater understanding with our fellow Christians with a view to ever stronger ties of love and fellowship among all the baptized.

"Given your circumstances, you are able to make your personal contribution to the goal of

greater Christian unity in your daily lives. Let me encourage you to do so, confident that the Spirit of the Lord, who prayed that his followers might be one, will accompany you in this important task."

Regarding dialogue with other faiths such as Islam, Benedict XVI acknowledged that "much still needs to be done throughout the world."

"This is another area where Catholics in Cyprus often live in circumstances which afford them opportunities for right and prudent action," he said. "Only by patient work can mutual trust be built, the burden of history overcome, and the political and cultural differences between peoples become a motive to work for deeper understanding.

"I urge you to help create such mutual trust between Christians and non-Christians as a basis for building lasting peace and harmony between peoples of different religions, political regions and cultural backgrounds."

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Full text: www.zenit.org/article-29485?l=english