



DICASTERY FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

***Christians and Sikhs: Caring for our “common home”
in light of the global climate crisis***

Message for Guru Nanak Prakash Diwas
2023

Vatican City

Dear Sikh Friends,

The Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue sends you cordial greetings on the occasion of the Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, celebrated worldwide this year on 27 November. May all your festive events bring you joy and peace and help enhance the spirit of unity and solidarity in your families and communities!

The climate crisis is one of the most pressing challenges facing us that requires immediate attention and a change of course. Concerned about unprecedented weather events and changes in weather patterns at a global level arising from environmental degradation, Pope Francis made a passionate appeal to the world in 2015 to nurture “a culture of care” for the environment (Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, On Care for our Common Home, 2015, no. 231). This year, through his Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum* (4 October 2023), in stressing the human - “anthropic” - origin of climate change, the Pope has once again made an urgent plea for a broader perspective and credible actions to be taken before it is too late to halt the enormous damage the climate crisis could unleash. In light of this renewed call for action, we wish to share with you some thoughts on how we, both Christians and Sikhs, can contribute to tackling the global climate crisis.

Among the anthropic aspects responsible for this crisis, the most predominant are human selfishness, greed, competitive and expansionist attitudes, unbridled consumerist lifestyles, indifference to the gravity of the crisis, a sense of resignation on the part of many, lack of political will and inaction. This means that in one way or another all of us are part of the problem and, therefore, we need to pay serious attention to the climate crisis and its repercussions. As individuals and communities, we are called to tackle the crisis as best we can, in earnest and in haste.

We are increasingly aware of the fact that “everything is connected” and we are “linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family”; hence “our care for one another and for the earth are intimately bound together” (*Laudate Deum*, nos. 3, 19, 67). This should spur us to be responsible stewards of the earth on which, for the most part, we depend for our sustenance and survival, and to be brothers and sisters to one another, seeking the wellbeing of humanity and of the earth itself. It also entails that we should stand in solidarity with the poor and the needy discarded by our society (cf. *Laudate Deum*, no. 31) for the common good.

Authentic belief, as Pope Francis says, “not only gives strength to the human heart, but also transforms life, transfigures our goals and sheds light on our relationships to others and with creation as a whole” (*Laudate Deum*, no. 61). Our respective religious convictions teach us to build healthy and harmonious relationships with one another and with creation and to care for them with respect and love. Dealing with the global climate crisis calls for shared strategy and synergy and this cannot be done alone; a joining of hearts, minds, and hands involving people at all levels of society is necessary. In this regard, religious leaders and interreligious dialogue have a vital role to play in bringing men and women of good will together.

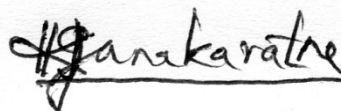
Families, communities, educational institutions, and the media also have a preeminent role in inculcating values and gestures in citizens that promote caring relationships with one another and with creation. Healthy practices such as having a balanced diet, saving energy and water, planting trees and seeking to reduce carbon emissions and pollution are of immense help in safeguarding the natural world, and these can be practised by all. As little drops make the mighty ocean, so concrete actions, education and good example in protecting the environment and preserving natural resources, will go a long way towards saving the earth from further damage and in remedying the damage humans have caused so far. Families and communities can make a significant contribution to tackle the climate crisis. World leaders surely have a greater responsibility towards forming a broader alliance for the protection and care of our common home. An adequate response to the present climate crisis calls for everyone in society to act responsibly.

As believers with shared convictions and concerns for the wellbeing of all and that of the earth, may we Christians and Sikhs, joining hands with everyone who cares for the welfare of humanity, endeavour to do all we can to bring about a positive change in climatic conditions and become responsible and genuine stewards of creation!

We wish you all a Happy Prakash Diwas of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji!



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