



DICASTERY FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Christians and Jains:

**Sowing Hope Together
for a More Fraternal and Peaceful World**

MESSAGE FOR MAHAVIR JANMA KALYANAK DIWAS
2025

Vatican City

Dear Friends,

The Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue offers you its most cordial greetings and best wishes as you celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Tirthankar Mahavir on 10 April this year. May the celebrations centred on this feast fill your hearts with peace and joy and further strengthen the bonds of love and unity in your families and communities!

Today, sadly, in many parts of the world there is a growing lack or loss of hope among people. The reasons for this are many, ranging from poverty, disasters, wars, environmental destruction, divisions and violence in society in the name of ethnicity, religion and nationality, and a growing sense of indifference among the masses and frequent displays of inhumanity among individuals, groups and nations.

We are also witnessing a crisis of hope among those engaged in peacebuilding in complex situations, since their efforts so often seem fruitless. A sense of cynicism, resignation and defeatism is spreading in society. In this context, we consider it opportune to share with you some thoughts on how we, both Jains and Christians, can sow seeds of hope in order to build a more fraternal and peaceful world.

Hope, in the words of Pope Francis, is “the virtue of the heart that doesn’t close itself in the dark, doesn’t stop at the past, doesn’t scrape along in the present, but can clearly see tomorrow.”¹ It is “the desire and expectation of good things to come,”² even amid our uncertainties and anxieties about the future. Hope is born of faith in the divine presence and providence, and sustained by the immense goodness of humanity lying latent in human hearts. It is fostered by choosing the good for sake of the common good. It follows that sowing the seeds of hope gets easier the more individuals and communities become bearers of hope and make choices that favour the common good and fraternal coexistence.

One of the “great roads of hope on which to walk is fraternity,” since “the hope of the world resides in fraternity.”³ Fraternity is surely the key to hope for a peaceful world. Men and women who strengthen fraternal bonds amidst diversity and differences sow the seeds of hope for a secure future for all. By living, nurturing and promoting fraternal love for one another, they concretely instil hope in each other. On this “road of hope,” there will be many challenges that can nonetheless be overcome by the strength of human fraternity and the firm resolve to never lose hope.

¹ *Hope, The Autobiography*, co-authored by Carlo Musso, Penguin Random House LLC, 2025, p. 291.

² Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025 *Spes Non Confundit*, 9 May 2024, 1.

³ Pope Francis, *Homily for First Vespers on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God and Te Deum in the Thanksgiving for the Past Year*, 31 December 2024.

Peace, in fact, is “a journey of hope in the face of obstacles and trial.”⁴ Human history bears witness to the fact that obstacles and trials can be transformed into opportunities for peace, provided all men and women of good will, inspired by hope, work together diligently, courageously and perseveringly.

By drawing inspiration and strength from our own spiritual traditions which are “wellsprings of hope,” all of us are called upon to increase our efforts to spread hope for a peaceful world on the foundations of human fraternity. “Future generations will stand up and judge us for our failure if peace is no more than ‘an empty word’ and if we haven’t achieved it through our actions with the peoples of the earth.”⁵ Hope, therefore, needs to be cultivated assiduously at all levels, starting with families, which are “workshops of hope.” Parents and elders play a vital role in inculcating in children the noble virtue of hope, in order to prepare them for future challenges. Religious leaders, and indeed all believers, have a moral duty to nurture a culture of hope for peace, by the witness of their lives and actions. Educational institutions and social media can make a significant contribution to promoting the virtue of hope through activities that foster fraternity and solidarity, and encourage peace to flourish.

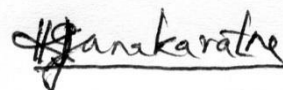
As believers and fellow pilgrims, grounded in our own respective religious traditions, with shared convictions, hopes and concerns and a sense of responsibility towards humanity, may we, Christians and Jains, join hands with people of other religious traditions and of good will, and strive in our own ways, individually and collectively, to foster a culture of fraternity and peace. In this way, may we inspire and encourage everyone to sow seeds of hope.⁶

This year also marks the sixtieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, the Declaration of the Second Vatican Council on the relation of the Catholic Church with non-Christian religions, which emphasized the importance of interreligious dialogue in spreading hope for a harmonious and peaceful coexistence among peoples. May this commemoration further renew in us and in all the spirit of fraternal dialogue and cooperation for peace in the world!

Once again, we wish you a Happy Shri Mahavir Janma Klayanak Diwas!



Cardinal George Jacob Koovakad
Prefect



Msgr. Indunil Kodithuwakku J. Kankanamalage
Secretary

⁴ Pope Francis, *Message for the Celebration of the 2020 World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2020, 1.

⁵ *Hope, The Autobiography*, op. cit. p. 159.

⁶ Cf. Pope Francis, *Message for the 2024 World Day of Prayer for Vocations*, 21 April 2024.

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