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## **Poland: the Catholic Church celebrating Islam Day. Mgr. Cierieszko (Bishops' Conference), "better knowledge for opening up to others"**

"Better knowledge, greater awareness, a more authentic way of living one's faith are not against dialogue, they actually allow one to open up to others", as mgr. Henryk Cierieszko, president of the Committee of Polish Bishops for Dialogue with Non-Christian Religions, who is also in charge of dialogue between Catholics and Muslims, pointed out on the occasion of Islam Day, which is celebrated by the Polish Church today. "It is precisely in dialogue that we express ourselves as Christians", the prelate added, as he highlighted the importance of "sharing goodness" on the background of the difficult experiences of the last few years. Established in 2001, his year's Islam Day has been named after the last message for Ramadan of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue: "Christians and Muslims: sharing joys and sorrows". For Imam Rafal Berger, co-president of the Polish Common Council of Catholics and Muslims, such words have "a great communal meaning that goes beyond the religious one", since sharing is "the foundation of every community, with no religious, racial, social or ethnic divisions". There are two officially registered Muslim communities in Poland. Since 1925, the first one has been grouping together the about 6 thousand Muslims of Tatar descent who live in the country, while the Muslim League, that was created in 2004 and has approximately 25 thousand members, is composed of Islamic devotees who come to Poland to study or work as well as those who, even if not originally Muslim, choose Islam as their religion.

Valentina Bombelli