
May 14th, Special Day: prayer brings us closer to God and creates communion

The Bishops' Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Dialogue wholeheartedly supports the initiative of the Higher Committee for Human Fraternity calling upon believers worldwide on 14 May next "to beseech God Almighty to safeguard the entire world" and "help us overcome this pandemic." Pope Francis adhered to this initiative and called upon the faithful to join in, and on several occasions in these difficult times invited all believers to pray incessantly - such as the extraordinary prayer at St. Peter's on March 27th - that the world may be delivered from evil and that peoples and nations may be united: "We are all on the same boat," he said.

A microscopic virus has gone global, tearing down borders and walls, and invading the world without asking for permission to enter or stay.

And yet, we continue to witness the sad spectacle of people wanting to save themselves or their nation only, to the exclusion of others, especially the poorest or the most vulnerable, as the elderly, who died by the thousands as a result of the pandemic. Conversely, for all believers, the power of prayer bring us closer to God and creates communion, overcoming barriers and limitations, leading us along the path of spiritual globalization - lacking in the world today. Faced with a disease that is causing illness and death, worsening poverty and the needs of many, we have learned that we are fragile, defenceless, and certainly not the absolute masters of creation that we have sometimes imagined to be. *As we experience the sadness of separation and physical distance, we long to rediscover the desire to be united, to walk together, regardless of our diversities. We wish to seek, through generous collaboration and solidarity, the responses to the nefarious consequences of the virus, that they may be available to all and pave the way for a more humane, fairer future.* May 14, Day of "prayer, fasting and charity", reflects the desire of every religion to experience the strength of their human and spiritual heritage in the world. This strength is never directed against others, and it must foster a culture of coexistence and universal peace. While hoping that many dioceses will join in this shared moment, we hope that fasting, supplications to God, and works of charity, will produce harmony in diversity, desired by God from the very beginning of creation, as described in the opening passages of the Bible. May prayer, fasting and charity put an end to the evil that afflicts us, spreading wisdom and hope for all. (*)*President of the Bishops' Commission for Ecumenism and Dialogue*

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