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## Coronavirus Covid-19. 145 religious leaders: “Reject vaccine nationalism. Moral obligation to reach everyone”

In a global effort, 145 religious leaders from across the world - Christians, Muslims, Jews and Buddhists - have united their voices in a letter to heads of State and Government and pharmaceutical companies calling for global and universal access to vaccines. “We call on all leaders to reject vaccine nationalism and embrace a commitment to global vaccine equity. As religious leaders, we join our voices to the call for vaccines that are made available to all people as a global common good – a People’s Vaccine. This is the only way to end the pandemic.” Signatories include Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the Franciscan friars of Assisi, Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury; Martin Junge, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation; Thabo Makgoba, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town; Jim Winkler, President of the National Council of Churches in the USA. The Guardian reported that the Dalai Lama also endorses the campaign. At the height of the “Indian emergency” the religious leaders recall our interdependence and our responsibilities “to care for one another.” *“We can each only be safe when all of us are safe. If one part of the world is left to suffer the pandemic, all parts of the world will be put at ever-increasing risk.”*



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[a coalition of organisations and activists campaigning for a ‘people’s vaccine’ for COVID-19, and calling for the COVID-19 vaccines to be free from patents. “Every person is precious. We all have a moral obligation to reach everyone, in every Country.” Signatories voice their concern over the inequitable vaccine availability in rich countries while in most low- and middle-income countries vaccines are only beginning to trickle in. “The access of people to life-saving Covid-19 vaccines cannot be dependent on people’s wealth, status, or nationality”, the religious leaders write in their statement. “We cannot abdicate our responsibilities to our brothers and sisters by imagining that the market can be left to resolve the crisis, or pretend to ourselves that our country has no obligation to people in their country.” Hence the request to the heads of Government, civil society and the private sector to increase and ramp up vaccine production so as to ensure sufficient doses for every person in the world.](#)



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[“Everyone must have access to the vaccine and as soon as possible”, Friar Marco Moroni, Custodian of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis in Assisi, told SIR, detailing the Franciscans’ endorsement of the Letter: “The selfishness of few threatens the planet. We cannot accept it”, said the Custodian. “We are still in time, we are one humanity and thus we are called to walk together without fear, with courage, and without “being afraid” of being left behind.” “Ours is becoming a fragmented humanity,” the custodian pointed out. “Eager to tend our little garden, to close the doors of our homes, to turn a blind eye to reality, the bitter reality: mistrust, selfishness and suffering. We have already forgotten the doctors and nurses who died over the past months. These persons fulfilled the law of love made manifest by Jesus during the Last Supper: ‘There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends’ \(John 15\)”.](#)



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