



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO AFRICA

MEETING OF JOHN PAUL II WITH THE MUSLIM LEADERS

Nairobi (Kenya), 7 Mai 1980

Dear Friends,

1. During my visit to Kenya I am very pleased to be able to greet a group of Muslim leaders. Your coming here today is deeply appreciated as an expression of your fraternal courtesy and respect.

Be assured that I reciprocate these sentiments in your regard and towards all the Muslim people of this land.

2. On other occasions I have spoken of the religious patrimony of Islam and of its spiritual values. The Catholic Church realizes that the element of worship given to the one, living, subsistent, merciful and almighty Creator of heaven and earth is common to Islam and herself, and that it is a great link uniting all Christians and Muslims. With great satisfaction she also notes, among other elements of Islam which are held in common, the honour attributed to Jesus Christ and his Virgin Mother. As the Catholic Church makes every effort to sustain religious dialogue with Islam on the basis of existing bonds, which she endeavours ever more to reflect on, she likewise extends the invitation that her own heritage be fully known, especially to those who are spiritually attached to Abraham, and who profess monotheism.

3. On my part I wish therefore to do everything possible to help develop the spiritual bonds between Christians and Muslims.

Prayer, almsgiving and fasting are highly valued in both of our respective traditions and are beyond doubt a splendid witness to a world that runs the risk of being absorbed by materialism.

Our relationship of reciprocal esteem and the mutual desire for authentic service to humanity urge us on to joint commitments in promoting peace, social justice, moral values and all the true freedoms of man.

4. It is in this perspective that our meeting today offers us much hope. May it prove beneficial to humanity and give glory to God, who made us in his image and likeness, and who has revealed himself to us.

With renewed sentiments of brotherhood I would ask you to carry my greetings to all the communities from which you come. Thank you again.