



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO A DELEGATION OF THE WORLD ISLAMIC CALL SOCIETY

Thursday, 15 February 1990

Dear Friends,

I am happy to welcome the delegation of the *World Islamic Call Society*, headed by your distinguished Secretary General, Dr Muhammad Ahmad Sherif, and accompanied here by Cardinal Arinze and the other Catholic participants in the dialogue on "Mission and Da'wah". The visit of representatives of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to Tripoli last March, and this return visit on the part of the World Islamic Call Society, offer us the hope of strengthening good will and cooperation between Christians and Muslims.

The topic of your discussion is a timely one. Since we are believers in God - who is Goodness and Perfection - all our activities must reflect the holy and upright nature of the One whom we worship and seek to obey. For this reason, also in the works of mission and da'wah, our actions must be founded upon a respect for the inalienable dignity and freedom of the human person created and loved by God. *Both Christians and Muslims are called to defend the inviolable right of each individual to freedom of religious belief and practice.*

There have been in the past, and there continue to be in the present, unfortunate instances of misunderstanding, intolerance and conflict between Christians and Muslims, especially in circumstances where either Muslims or Christians are a minority or are guest workers in a given country: It is our challenge as religious leaders to find ways to overcome such difficulties in a spirit of justice, brotherhood and mutual respect. Hence, by considering the proper means of carrying out mission and da'wah, you are dealing with an issue which is important both for religious and for social harmony.

You have also been addressing the difficulties faced today by those who believe in God in their

efforts to proclaim his presence and his will for mankind. As believers, we do not deny or reject any of the real benefits which modern developments have brought, but we are convinced nevertheless that without reference to God modern society is unable to lead men and women to the goal for which they have been created.

It is here too that Christians and Muslims can work together, bearing witness before modern civilization to the divine Presence and loving Providence which guide our steps. Together we can proclaim that He who has made us has called us to live in harmony and justice. May the blessings of the Most High accompany you in your endeavours on behalf of dialogue and peace!

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