



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT
OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO NAPLES

MEETING WITH THE HEADS OF THE DELEGATIONS
TAKING PART IN THE INTERNATIONAL ENCOUNTER FOR PEACE

GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Archdiocesan Seminary at Capodimonte, Naples
Sunday, 21 October 2007

Your Holinesses, Your Beatitudes,
Distinguished Authorities representing the Churches and Ecclesial Communities,
Eminent Spokespersons of the great World Religions,

I gladly take this opportunity to greet the Personalities who have gathered here in Naples for the 21st Meeting on the theme: "*For a world without violence - Religions and cultures in dialogue*". In a certain sense, what you represent expresses the different worlds and religious patrimonies of humanity to which the Catholic Church looks with sincere respect and cordial attention. A word of appreciation goes to Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe and the Archdiocese of Naples, which is hosting this meeting, as well as to the Sant'Egidio Community which works with dedication to encourage dialogue between religions and cultures in the "spirit of Assisi".

Today's meeting takes us back in spirit to [1986](#), when my venerable Predecessor John Paul II invited important Religious Representatives to the hills of St Francis to pray for peace, stressing on that occasion the intrinsic ties that combine an authentic religious attitude with keen sensitivity to this fundamental good of humanity. In [2002](#), after the dramatic events of 11 September the previous year, John Paul II himself once again summoned Religious Leaders to Assisi to ask God to halt the serious threats that were looming over humanity, due especially to terrorism.

While respecting the differences of the various religions, we are all called to work for peace and to be effectively committed to furthering reconciliation among peoples. This is the true "spirit of Assisi" which opposes every form of violence and the abuse of religion as a pretext for violence. In the face of a world torn apart by conflicts, where violence in God's Name is at times justified, it is important to reaffirm that religions can never become vehicles of hatred; it is never possible, invoking God's Name, to succeed in justifying evil and violence. On the contrary, religions can and must offer precious resources to build a peaceful humanity because they speak of peace to the human heart. The Catholic Church intends to continue on the path of dialogue in order to encourage understanding between the different cultures, traditions and forms of religious wisdom. I warmly hope that this spirit will be spread increasingly, especially where tensions are strongest, where freedom and respect for others are denied and where men and women suffer the consequences of intolerance and misunderstanding.

Dear friends, may these days of work and listening be fruitful for all. I address my prayers to Eternal God for this, so that he may pour out upon each one of the participants in the meeting an abundance of his Blessings, wisdom and love. May he free human hearts of all hatred and uproot all violence, and make us all artisans of the civilization of love.

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