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Message of the Holy Father Francis to the Secretary General of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity

The following is the Message sent by the Holy Father Francis to the Secretary General of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity, His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Abdelsalam, on the occasion of the fifth edition of the Award, which was read out by the prefect of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, His Eminence Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, M.C.C.J.:

Message of the Holy Father

To Mr Mohamed Abdelsalam

Secretary-General of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity

On the occasion of the 2024 International Day of Human Fraternity, which also marks the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Document on Human Fraternity, I send heartfelt greetings and sentiments of warm friendship to all present for this year's presentation of the Zayed Award.

It is encouraging to see that the journey of dialogue, companionship and mutual esteem which began in Abu Dhabi five years ago continues to bear fruit. I particularly wish to renew my gratitude to Dr Ahmad Al-Tayyib, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, and to His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates for their vital support of initiatives aimed at promoting the values of fraternity and social comradeship founded on the truth that all human beings are not only created equal but are intrinsically connected as brothers and sisters, children of our one Father in heaven.

In a special way, I extend congratulations to the three joint recipients of this year's Award: the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah Organizations from Indonesia, Dr Magdi Yacoub from Egypt and Sister Nelly Leon from Chile. That these honourees have been selected from a great number of other candidates is yet another sign that the values celebrated and promoted on this day are resonating throughout our human family.

At the same time, however, we cannot fail to recognize the effects of an absence of fraternal solidarity being felt all too intensely by men and women everywhere and by our natural world. The negative impact of environmental destruction and social degradation continues to cause immense suffering for a vast number of our brothers and sisters around the globe. How timely, then, to draw attention to the principles that can guide humanity through the dark shadows of injustice, hatred and war into the brightness of a world community marked by those values that we see manifest in the varied efforts of this year's awardees. These include tolerant love for those who are different, a genuine care for the poor and sick, especially children, and a desire to assist the rehabilitation of prisoners and their reintegration into society. All of the joint recipients, in their own distinctive ways, cast important light on the path to greater social solidarity and fraternal love.

Yet no individual or human effort alone can advance progress on this journey. Indeed, the Zayed Award itself stands as a reminder that "without an openness to the Father of all, there will be no solid and stable reasons for an appeal to fraternity... For 'reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality between men and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity'" (*Fratelli Tutti*, 272). It is my prayer, then, that all who participate in the International Day may be encouraged not only by the example of the awardees' good works but also by the religious insights and beliefs that inspired in them such generosity of heart.

Finally, in addressing those associated with the Zayed Award, I likewise extend my greeting and prayerful good wishes to each and every one of our brothers and sisters, especially those who are suffering in any way. May they know the closeness and concern of people of faith around the world. With these sentiments and with great affection, I willingly invoke upon all an abundance of divine blessings.

From the Vatican, 4 February 2024

FRANCIS
