

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

SIXTH COLLOQUIUM

**JOINT DECLARATION OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL  
FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE (VATICAN)  
AND THE CENTRE FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE  
OF THE ISLAMIC CULTURE AND  
RELATIONS ORGANISATION (TEHRAN, IRAN)**

*Rome, 28-30 April 2008*

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Vatican) and the Centre for Inter-religious Dialogue of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organisation (Tehran, Iran) held their sixth Colloquium in Rome from 28 - 30 April 2008 under the joint presidency of His Eminence Cardinal Jean-Louis TAURAN, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and His Excellency Dr. Mahdi MOSTAFAVI, President of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organisation.

The delegation of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue was composed as follows:

- His Excellency Archbishop Pier Luigi CELATA
- His Excellency Archbishop Ramzi GARMOU
- Reverend Monsignor Khaled AKASHEH
- Reverend Monsignor Prof. Piero CODA
- Reverend Father Prof. Michel FÉDOU, S.J.
- Prof. Vittorio POSSENTI
- Dr. Ilaria MORALI

The delegation of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organisation was composed as follows:

- Hojjat al-Islam Dr. Mohammad Jafar ELMI
- Hojjat al-Islam Dr. Mohammad MASJEDJAMEI
- Dr. Abdolrahim GAVAH
- Hojjat al-Islam Dr. Seyyed Mahdi KHAMOUSHI
- Hojjat al-Islam Dr. Hamid PARSANIA

- Dr. Rasoul RASOULIPOUR

- Mr. Mohsen DANESHMAND

The participants, with the help of six papers presented by three scholars from each side, examined the theme *Faith and Reason in Christianity and Islam*, which was developed through three subthemes from the point of view of Catholics and Shi'a Muslims: 1) *Faith and reason: Which relation?* 2) *Theology/Kalam as inquiry into the rationality of faith*; 3) *Faith and reason confronted with the phenomenon of violence*.

And the end of the meeting the participants agreed upon the following:

1. Faith and reason are both gifts of God to mankind.
2. Faith and reason do not contradict each other, but faith might in some cases be above reason, but never against it.
3. Faith and reason are intrinsically non-violent. Neither reason nor faith should be used for violence; unfortunately, both of them have been sometimes misused to perpetrate violence. In any case, these events cannot question either reason or faith.
4. Both sides agreed to further co-operate in order to promote genuine religiosity, in particular spirituality, to encourage respect for symbols considered to be sacred and to promote moral values.
5. Christians and Muslims should go beyond tolerance, accepting differences, while remaining aware of commonalities and thanking God for them. They are called to mutual respect, thereby condemning derision of religious beliefs.
6. Generalization should be avoided when speaking of religions. Differences of confessions within Christianity and Islam, diversity of historical contexts are important factors to be considered.
7. Religious traditions cannot be judged on the basis of a single verse or a passage present in their respective holy Books. A holistic vision as well as an adequate hermeneutical method is necessary for a fair understanding of them.

The participants expressed their satisfaction with the level of the presentations and the debates as well as the open and friendly atmosphere during the colloquium.

The participants were honoured and pleased to be received at the end of the colloquium by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, who was particularly satisfied with the choice of the theme and the venue of the meeting.

The next colloquium will be held in Tehran within two years, preceded by a preparatory meeting.