

<i>Name of Publication</i>	L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO <small>GIORNALE QUOTIDIANO POLITICO RELIGIOSO</small> <small>Ente unico come 2028 Non periodico</small>  <i>Italy</i>
<i>Date</i>	<i>6-7/07/2009</i>
<i>Circulation</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Readership</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Type</i>	<i>Newspaper</i>

Translation

CARDINAL TAURAN AT THE CONGRESS OF LEADERS OF WORLD AND TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS IN ASTANA

The role of religions in the unity of the human family

“Unity of the human family is the ultimate foundation of worldwide solidarity and the basis in the search of common ethical values which, fortunately, have known an increasing interest.” This is what cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, who led the Vatican delegation, said at the 3rd Congress of Traditional and World Religions. This event was held in Astana, upon President Nazarbayev’s initiative, and brought together representatives of world religions as well as leading international political and cultural figures.

The event focused on the role of religions in building a world of tolerance, mutual respect and cooperation. Three roundtable discussions led to an in-depth exchange on topics such as Moral and spiritual values for world ethics, Dialogue and cooperation, and, Solidarity, particularly in crisis periods.

Believers, said the Cardinal, think that ethics can not only set behavioural norms, but should also shape the human conscience and contribute to understanding requirements of natural law: we must promote good and avoid evil. This is a fundamental principle that enables dialogue between people of different cultures and religions. As believers, we must succeed in indicating to our kin, men and women, that our values are fundamental for them, in order to promote comprehension and mutual acknowledgement and cooperation amongst all members of the human family.”

Cardinal Tauran also quoted the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as “one of the greatest expressions of modern historical conscience” that, without doubt, contributed to make the men and women of our times, “aware of the legacy of values inherent to human family and its dignity.” Nonetheless believers find themselves in a position to “enlighten the teaching that man was created at the image and resemblance of God. They were created equal. They have received from the Creator inalienable rights including the right to live, to be free and to pursue happiness.”

“We must therefore, said the Cardinal, value the progress of science and technology, not only based on the results they achieve, but also based on their capacity to defend the human specificity and to control the fundamental spiritual values that prevail on our instinctive reactions.” This is why Benedict XVI often reminds of the nobility of the reason that manifests itself as in-between a human behaviour of a person and of the society. It is therefore urgent to “verify that in our life truth prevails on ambiguity. We should oppose

the tendency to separate human rights from rational and ethical dimensions." According to Cardinal Tauran, the lawmaker should act "in an ethically responsible way to ensure that politics cannot set aside ethics, just as civil law and legal order cannot set aside the moral law's superiority."

"Religious wisdom and philosophies - the President of Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue concluded - must testify of the existence of a moral legacy, widely shared, that forms the basis of all dialogue on moral issues. Such a legacy expresses a universal ethical message that Man can understand. The forms that can take these traditions can differ depending on cultures and situations, but we should nevertheless remember the existence of the legacy of moral values common to all human beings."

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