

VATICAN NEWS

PRESS KIT

Human Fraternity in the Pontificate of Pope Francis

For the occasion of the third anniversary of the signing of the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* and the second International Day of Human Fraternity

Timeline

Full Biographies of Higher Committee Members

Zayed Award for Human Fraternity

Promotional Materials for the International Day of Human Fraternity



Timeline

2017

- 11 March** Director of the Holy See Press Office responds to reports that a visit to Egypt by Pope Francis was under study ([Bulletin](#)), ([Vatican Radio](#))
- 18 March** Director of the Holy See Press Office announces that Pope Francis has accepted the invitation of the “President of the Republic [of Egypt], the Bishops of the Catholic Church, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Head of Muslim Council of Elders, Sheikh Ahmed Mohamed el-Tayyeb.” ([Bulletin](#)) ([Vatican Radio](#))
- 28 April** Pope Francis addresses the International Peace Conference at the Al-Azhar Conference Centre in Cairo ([Discourse](#)). In his discourse, he acknowledges the invitation of the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Head of Muslim Council of Elders: “I thank my brother, the Grand Imam, for having planned and organized this Conference, and for kindly inviting me to take part.”
- He also references the work of the Mixed Committee for Dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Committee of Al-Azhar for Dialogue as an example of the “encounter of religions and cultures” on which “the future depends”.
- Drawing inspiration from Egypt’s place in ancient civilization, the Pontiff then explained three aspects to “assist this dialogue: the duty to respect one’s own identity and that of others, the courage to accept differences, and sincerity of intentions.” These three things “represent the best way forward together, to be builders of civility. For the only alternative to the civility of encounter is the incivility of conflict.”
- He then quoted Pope John Paul II’s address to Muslim leaders in Kaduna, Nigeria in 1982: “We live under the sun of the one merciful God... Thus, in a true sense, we can call one another brothers and sisters... since without God the life of man would be like the heavens without the sun”.
- Since Egypt is also the land of the covenant, Pope Francis made a heartfelt appeal that religious leaders “unmask the violence that masquerades as purported sanctity and is based more on the “absolutizing” of selfishness than on authentic openness to the Absolute” and to reject “every form of violence, vengeance and hatred carried out in the name of religion or in the name of God.”

2019

- 31 January** Pope Francis releases a video message to the people of the UAE in which he thanks the Crown Prince for inviting him to participate in the Interreligious meeting on “Human Fraternity”. He says he looks forward to writing “a new page in the history of relations between religions, confirming that we are brothers and sisters, even though we are different”. ([Vatican News](#)) ([Video](#))
- 3 February** Holy See Press Office Director communicates to journalists that Pope Francis would award Judge Abdel Salam in late March with the *Commenda con Placca dell’Ordine Piano* (Knight Commander with Star of the Order of Pius IX) award in gratitude for his work in strengthening relations between al-Azhar and the Catholic Church. ([Vatican News](#))

4 February Pope Francis addresses an Interreligious gathering taking place in the context of the Global Conference of Human Fraternity at the Founder's Memorial in Abu Dhabi, during the 8th centenary of Saint Francis of Assisi's meeting with Sultan al-Malik al Kāmil. The crux of his message is that "The point of departure is the recognition that God is at the origin of the one human family. He who is the Creator of all things and of all persons wants us to live as brothers and sisters, dwelling in the common home of creation which he has given us. Fraternity is established here at the roots of our common humanity". ([Discourse](#)) ([Vatican News](#)) ([Video](#))

Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Head of Muslim Council of Elders, Sheikh Ahmed Mohamed el-Tayyeb sign the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together. The drafting of the text took over a year to complete. ([Document](#), [live streamed event](#)) ([Video](#))

Director of the Holy See Press Office statement regarding the signing of the Document on Human Fraternity ([Bulletin](#))

5 February Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, announces the construction of the Abrahamic House "to commemorate the historic visit of Pope Francis and Grand Imam Ahmad Al Tayyeb, and to reflect the peaceful coexistence of different communities in the UAE." ([Tweet](#))

Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Head of Muslim Council of Elders are the first recipients of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity. It was later revealed that Pope Francis donated the full amount of the award to the Rohingya people from Myanmar.

6 February Pope Francis revisits his Apostolic Journey to the UAE, noting, "I signed the Document on Human Fraternity, in which together we state the common vocation of all men and women to be brothers and sisters as we are the sons and daughters of God; we condemn all forms of violence, especially those cloaked in religious motivations; and we commit ourselves to spread authentic values and peace throughout the world. This Document will be studied in the schools and universities of many countries. But I also recommend that you read it, get to know it, because it offers many incentives for furthering the dialogue on human fraternity." ([Discourse](#)) ([Vatican News](#))

7 February Then-Bishop Miguel Ayuso says in an interview with Vatican News that Pope Francis's historic visit to the United Arab Emirates is being widely seen as a milestone in interreligious dialogue. In addition, he calls the Document on Human Fraternity a precious roadmap for peace, and says it contains indications that must be spread throughout the world. This document, he says, has its roots in the necessity to safeguard the future of mankind and of the world and is particularly poignant in the face of "a wounded humanity". "Universal fraternity is key so that through a culture of dialogue, joint collaboration and mutual knowledge may be the pillars for building a better world". ([Vatican News](#))

19 August The Emirates News Agency announces the formation of a Higher Committee to implement the Document on Human Fraternity. Committee members include Bishop Miguel Ángel Mohamed Hussein Mahrasawi, President of Al-Azhar University;

Monsignor Yoannis Lahzi Gaid, Personal Secretary of Pope Francis; Judge Mohamed Mahmoud Abdel Salam; Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi; Dr Sultan Faisal Al Rumaithi, Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Elders; and Yasser Hareb Al Muhairi, Emirati writer and media personality.”

The task outlined for the Committee was defined as “developing a framework to ensure the objectives of the global Declaration of Human Fraternity are realised. It will also prepare the necessary plans to implement the document, follow up on its implementation at regional and international levels, and hold meetings with religious leaders, heads of international organizations and others to support and spread the idea behind this historic document.” ([Statement](#)) ([Vatican News](#))

26 August

Director of the Holy See Press Office announces that Pope Francis was pleased to learn of the formation of a “Higher Committee for achieving the goals contained in the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, which he signed last February in the United Arab Emirates together with the Grand Imam of Al Azhar.... The Holy Father encourages the efforts of the Committee to spread knowledge of the Document; he thanks the United Arab Emirates for the concrete commitment shown on behalf of human fraternity and he expresses the hope that similar initiatives can spring up throughout the world.” ([Bulletin](#)) ([Vatican News](#))

In an interview with Vatican News’s Alessandro Gisotti, then-Bishop Miguel Ayuso, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, says the formation of the committee is very important and will help educators get to the heart of the Document on Human Fraternity.

He addressed the topic of education, one of the main tasks of the Committee: “The opportunity to educate ourselves and others in a culture of encounter, fraternity, and peace means finding the will to redesign the academic and educational programs offered by Institutes and universities.”

Regarding the criticism that the Document on Human Fraternity is syncretistic, the then-Bishop said, “It is not about creating a ‘melting pot’ in which all religions are considered equal, but [recognizing] that all believers, those who seek God, and all people of good will without religious affiliation are equal in dignity.” “Pluralism in our societies – not only the religious kind – is a reality that invites us to reflect on our identity, without which authentic interreligious dialogue is impossible.” ([Interview in Italian](#); [Summary in English](#))

11 Sept

The Higher Committee for achieving the goals contained in the Document on Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together meets for the first time in the Vatican at the Casa Santa Marta. Pope Francis “expressed some words of gratitude and encouragement to the members of the Committee, ‘artisans of fraternity’, for them to be at the origin of new policies ‘not only of outstretched hands, but of open hearts’.” ([Bulletin](#)) ([Vatican News](#))

In their first meeting, the Higher Committee appointed then-Bishop Ayuso as Chairman of the Committee sessions for the first year; Mohamed Mahmoud Abdel Salam as its Secretary General; and Msgr. Yoannis Lahzi Gaid, Yasser Saeed Abdulla Hareb Al Muhairi and Sultan Faisal Al Khalifa Alremeithi as members of the Executive Office. It was decided that the office of Chairman would rotate between the Holy See and Al-Azhar. Their first goals were defined as: 1) to propose to the United Nations that a Day of Human Fraternity be instituted either the 3rd, 4th or 5th of February. The official statement also

communicated that 11 September was specifically chosen for the date of their first meeting “as a sign of the will to build life and fraternity where others sowed death and destruction.” ([Bulletin](#)) ([Vatican News](#))

17 Sept The Higher Committee welcomes its eighth member, the Rabbi M. Bruce Lustig, Senior Rabbi at Washington Hebrew Congregation. "It was my hope that such an event would be a watershed moment to bring new opportunities for building bridges between religious leaders and communities as well as to foster Peace and Harmony in our fractured world" Rabbi M. Bruce Lustig says. "I am honoured to join such esteemed individuals working to champion love over hate, justice over injustice, and faith over fear...", adding that "Empowered by the knowledge as children of Abraham that all are created in the Divine image, we must seek justice and peace for all of God's Children. May God give each of us the strength and the courage to bring harmony, hope, justice, and love into our fractured world as envisioned in the Human Fraternity Declaration and as demanded by our common faith in God." ([Vatican News](#))

20 Sept The Higher Committee meets for the second time in New York as leaders from around the world participate in the opening of the 74th Session of the United Nations. Judge Mohamed Mahmoud Abdel Salam says during a press conference that “the Secretary-General is going to request member States to include the principles contained in this historic document in their local legislation”. ([Vatican News](#)) ([Video](#))

The first public event hosted by the Higher Committee takes place at the New York Public Library, bringing together hundreds of people from different religious and cultural backgrounds. During the celebration the Higher Committee introduces the plans that had been selected for the construction of the Abrahamic House. ([Vatican News](#)) ([Video](#))

15 Nov Pope Francis meets with the Grand Imam of Alazhar, Head of Muslim Council of Elders for the purpose of discussing how to “achieve the objectives contained in the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together.” On the same day, the Higher Committee introduces their ninth member to the Pope, Ms Irina Georgieva Bokova, as well as the plans for the Abrahamic House unveiled in New York in September ([Bulletin](#)) ([Vatican News](#))

5 Dec Members of the Higher Committee meet with UN Secretary-General António Guterres “to convey to him a message from Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmed Al-Tayyeb. The message proposes that 4 February be declared World Day of Human Fraternity and asks the United Nations to participate, together with the Holy See and Al-Azhar, in the organization, in the near future, of a World Summit on Human Fraternity. Guterres appoints “Dr. Adama Dieng, the United Nations Secretary General’s Special Adviser on Hate Speech and the Prevention of Genocide, as the United Nations Representative to follow the proposed activities and to collaborate with the High Committee.” ([Bulletin](#)) ([Vatican News](#))

2020

3 February The Muslim Council of Elders launches the Arab Media Convention for Human Fraternity as part of the first anniversary celebrations of the signing of the Document on Human

Fraternity in Abu Dhabi. ([Vatican News](#)) ([Video](#))

4 February Judge Mohamed Abdel Salam and Msgr Yoannis Gaid introduce the adoption of a Code of Ethics for Human Fraternity for Arab media professionals which they hope will be adopted internationally. ([Vatican News](#))

A second Celebration of Human Fraternity takes place in Abu Dhabi ([Vatican News](#)) Patriarch Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and the Eastern Orthodox Church also participates.

Six persons who model the ideals of human fraternity presented their initiatives: Latifah Ibn Ziaten, Founder of Imad Association for Youth and Peace; Muhammad Saqib, Founder of Akhuwat Micro-Financing; Susan Esserman, Founder and Director of the University of Maryland Support, Advocacy, Freedom, and Empowerment (SAFE) Center for Human Trafficking Survivors; Daniela Pompei, Director of the Humanitarian Corridor of the St Egidio community; Yasmine Sherif, Director of Education Cannot Wait; Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate.

Both Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Alazhar, Head of Muslim Council of Elders participate through video messages. ([Vatican News](#)) ([Video](#))

The Higher Committee introduces their newest member, Leymah Gbowee. Sheik Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan announces that the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity, which was first awarded to Francis and the Grand Imam of Alazhar, Head of Muslim Council of Elders in 2019, would now become an annual event. ([Vatican News](#))

31 March The Higher Committee includes the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches as its eleventh member.

2 May The Higher Committee releases an invitation to all believers in God to participate in a “day for fasting, prayers, and supplications for the good of all humanity” on 14 May to “together beseech God Almighty to safeguard the entire world, to help us overcome this pandemic, to restore security, stability, healthiness, and prosperity, so that, after this pandemic is over, our world will become a better place for humanity and fraternity than ever before.” ([Bulletin](#)) ([Vatican News](#))

3 May In words spoken after the recitation of the Angelus, Pope Francis states: “I have accepted the proposal of the Higher Committee for Human Fraternity for believers of all religions to unite spiritually this 14 May for a day of prayer, fasting, and works of charity, to implore God to help humanity overcome the coronavirus pandemic. Remember: 14 May, all believers together, believers of different traditions, to pray, fast, and perform works of charity.” ([Discourse](#)) ([Vatican News](#)) ([Video](#))

13 May During the Wednesday General Audience, Pope Francis renews his invitation for people of all faiths to unite in prayer, fasting, and works of charity on Thursday for an end to the Covid-19 pandemic. ([Vatican News](#)) ([Video](#))

14 May Pope Francis dedicates the prayer intention for morning Mass to the intention proposed by the Higher Committee for Human Fraternity. During his homily, he says: “We are all united as human beings, as brothers and sisters, praying to God according to each one’s culture, according to each one’s own tradition, according to each one’s own beliefs, but brothers and sisters praying to God, this is what is important! Brothers and sisters, fasting, asking God to forgive our sins, so that the Lord might have mercy on us, so that the Lord will forgive us, so that the Lord may end this pandemic. Today is a day of fraternity, looking to the one Father: brothers and sisters and paternity. Day of prayer.” ([Discourse](#)) ([Vatican News](#)) ([Video](#))

- 3 October** Pope Francis signs his latest Encyclical *Fratelli tutti* in Assisi. ([Bulletin](#)) ([Vatican News](#)) ([Video](#))
- 4 October** Encyclical *Fratelli tutti* is released to the public. ([Encyclical](#)) ([Vatican News long summary](#); [Vatican News short summary](#))
- Press Conference introducing Pope Francis's latest Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. Included on the panel presenting the document are: Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State; His Eminence Cardinal Miguel Ayuso, Prefect of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue; Judge Mohamed Mahmoud Abdel Salam, Secretary General for the Higher Committee for Human Fraternity; Professor Anna Rowlands, Professor of Catholic Social Thought and Practice, University of Durham (UK), and Professor Andrea Riccardi, Founder of the Sant'Egidio Community and Professor of Contemporary History. ([Bulletin](#)) ([Vatican News](#)) ([Vatican News article on Parolin's presentation](#))
- Pope Francis introduces his new Encyclical *Fratelli tutti* after reciting the Angelus. "Yesterday I was in Assisi to sign the new encyclical, *Fratelli tutti*, on fraternity and social friendship. I offered it to God on the tomb of Saint Francis who inspired as in the preceding Encyclical *Laudato si'*."
- "The signs of the times show clearly that human fraternity and the care of creation form the sole way toward integral development and peace, as already indicated by the saintly Popes John XXIII, Paul VI and John Paul II."
- He ends his presentation with the words: "May St. Francis accompany the journey of fraternity in the Church, between believers of all religions between and all people". A special edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* containing the Encyclical is given to everyone in the Square. ([Discourse](#)) ([Vatican News](#)) ([Video](#))
- 19 October** The Higher Committee for Human Fraternity launches a worldwide search for persons embodying the "values of humility, humanitarianism and respect". Members of the selection committee are: former President of the Central African Republic Catherine Samba-Panza, former Vice-president of Indonesia Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, the 27th Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada Michaëlle Jean, Cardinal Dominique Mamberti Cardinal, serving in the Vatican's Supreme Tribunal, and Adama Dieng a former UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. ([Vatican News](#))
- 23 October** Pope Francis meets with members of the Higher Committee and the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity Committee in Rome for their first meeting. Zayed Award for Human Fraternity Committee members laud the Document on Human Fraternity as significant, "especially in light of the challenges and crises the world is going through." They also expressed their appreciation for what the Higher Committee for Human Fraternity is doing to "promote the culture of coexistence, in addition to its initiative to support the award and set neutral criteria for its awarding." Since the Higher Committee was formed by the United Arab Emirates, the panel also acknowledges the "UAE's keenness to support the efforts aimed at realizing the objectives of the Document on Human Fraternity." ([Bulletin](#)) ([Vatican News](#))
- 21 Dec** The United Nations declares February 4 International Day of Human Fraternity, beginning in 2021. The Assembly invites the Member States, the United Nations system and others to observe the annual day in a manner they each considers appropriate to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue.
- The representative of the United Arab Emirates introduced the resolution on behalf of several countries, saying the move is a response to growing religious hatred amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Judge Mohamed Mahmoud Abdel Salam regarded the adoption of the International Day of Human Fraternity as “a great historic achievement in the history of humanity”. ([Vatican News](#))

2021

- 1 February** Vatican Radio-Vatican News interview with the president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, and Mohamed Mahmoud Abdel Salam, secretary general of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity. ([Vatican News](#))
- 3 February** At the General Audience and in a tweet, Pope Francis recalls the first International Day of Human Fraternity. ([Bulletin](#)) ([Video](#)) ([Tweet](#))
- 3 February** In a virtual press conference, the names of the winners of the Zayed Prize 2021 are announced: the secretary general of the UN, António Guterres, and Latifa Ibn Zaiaten, founder of the Imad Association for Youth and Peace. Pope Francis congratulates them in a tweet. ([Vatican News](#)) ([Tweet](#))
- 3 February** The new web site dedicated to the International Day of Human Fraternity is on line. ([Vatican News](#))([link to the site](#))
- 4 February** A virtual ceremony is held in Abu Dhabi on the occasion of the first International Day of Human Fraternity. Pope Francis intervenes via a video message and subsequently issues a tweet. ([Video Message](#)) ([Vatican News](#)) ([Vatican News](#)) ([Tweet](#))
- 5 February** In a tweet, Pope Francis recalls the importance of social friendship and universal fraternity. ([Tweet](#))
- 3 March** Presentation in Moscow of the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* translated into Russian. The Pope sends a message. ([Bulletin](#)) ([Vatican News](#))
- 3 March** In view of International Women’s Day, female religious and diplomatic leaders participate in the webinar “Women read *Fratelli Tutti*”. ([Vatican News](#))
- 4 March** On the eve of Pope Francis’ departure for Iraq, the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity issues a communiqué. A second communiqué is issued on 8 March, at the end of the journey. ([Vatican News](#)) ([Vatican News](#))
- 5-8 March** Apostolic journey of Pope Francis in Iraq ([Vatican.va](#))
- 10 March** In Abu Dhabi, the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity hosts its first virtual forum of women.
- 8 April** Pope Francis meets with Mohamed Mahmoud Abdel Salam, secretary general of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, along with another two members of the same Committee, Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and Msgr. Yoannis Gaid. ([Vatican News](#))

- 15 April** On the web, an event dedicated to the theme: “Fraternity, multilateralism and peace”, focusing on the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*. ([Vatican News](#)) ([Vatican News](#))
- 11 May** In Rome, a conference organized by the Embassy of Senegal to the Holy See and the Sant’Egidio Community on the application of the Document on Human Fraternity, Islamic-Christian dialogue, and the culture of peace in Senegal.
- 18 May** In Geneva, Mohamed Mahmoud Abdel Salam, secretary general of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, and Filippo Grandi, UNHCR High Commissioner, sign a Letter of Mutual Intent to develop joint humanitarian initiatives for the protection of refugees.
- 3 June** Webinar organized by the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, entitled “A Moment of Human Fraternity: The impact of Pope Francis’ historic Iraq visit”. ([Vatican News](#))
- 29 June** The 15th edition of Publifestival (International Festival of Social Advertising) awards the first prize in the category “Best execution of an advertising campaign” to the campaign created by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Holy See Dicastery for Communication together with the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity and produced by the agency *La Machi Comunicazione per le Buone Cause*. ([Vatican News](#))
- 1 July** Opening of applications for the 2022 edition of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity. ([Vatican News](#))
- 5 July** In a visit to the Arab Emirates, Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi, prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, signs an agreement in collaboration with the Ministry for Education of the United Arab Emirates. The accord is result of the Document on Human Fraternity. ([Vatican News](#))
- 10 August** Meeting of the Zayed Award 2022 Selection Committee. ([Vatican News](#))
- 1 October** The Dubai Expo takes place. The Holy See is present with a pavilion based on the theme “Connecting Minds, Creating the Future” and animated by the Pontifical Council for Culture. The symbols of the pavilion are two historical encounters: between Saint Francis and Sultan Malik Al-Kāmil, 800 years ago, and between Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, in Abu Dhabi on 4 February 2019. ([Bulletin](#))
- 4 October** The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, is received in audience by Pope Francis together with Mohamed Mahmoud Abdel Salam, secretary general of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity and author of the book “The Pope and the Grand Imam”, which recounts the history and decisions that led to the signing of the Document in Abu Dhabi in 2019. ([Bulletin](#)) ([Vatican News](#)).
- 4 October** In the Vatican, meeting entitled “Faith and science: towards COP26”. The speakers include, among others, Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb. At the end, an appeal is signed and issued. ([Pope’s Address](#)) ([Vatican News](#)) ([Video](#))
- 7 October** In Rome, in front of the Colosseum, closing ceremony of the 35th edition of the Meeting for Peace promoted by the Sant’Egidio Community on the theme: “Peoples as brothers, future earth. Religions and cultures in dialogue”. The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, and Pope Francis also take part. ([Pope’s Address](#)) ([Vatican News](#)) ([Video](#))

- 8 October** In an interview with the Vatican media, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, talks about his relationship with Pope Francis. ([Vatican News](#))
- 8 October** The Vatican News–Vatican Radio headquarters hosts a press conference with members of the jury of the Zayed Award 2022.
- 21 October** In Rome, at the Pontifical Gregorian University, a series of conferences commences, on the theme “*Fratelli Tutti*: the Dream of God for a more human world”.
- 8-9 Nov** In Rome, at Villa Malta, a conference is held on the theme “The culture of encounter: the future of intercultural and interreligious dialogue”, promoted by the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs of Georgetown University and *La Civiltà Cattolica*. Pope Francis sends a message. ([Vatican News](#))
- 16 Nov** The Global Interfaith Summit is held in Dubai, on the occasion of the International Day for Tolerance.
- 24-25 Nov** Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, visits Moscow.
- 7 Dec** In New York, at the UN Headquarters, a delegation of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity meets the secretary general of the United Nations, António Guterres, to discuss new ways and strategies for improving cooperation in the promotion of human fraternity. ([Bulletin](#))
- 10 Dec** In Bahrain, in Awali, the Cathedral of Our Lady of Arabia, patron saint of the Perisna Gulf, is inaugurated. ([Vatican News](#))

Full Biographies of Higher Committee Members

Cardinal Miguel Àngel Ayuso Guixot, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue



His Eminence Miguel Àngel Ayuso Guixot was born in Seville, Spain in 1952. He is a member of the Congregation of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, (M.C.C.J.). He was ordained a priest in 1980 and until 2002 was missioned in service to the Church in Egypt and Sudan. In addition to Spanish, he also speaks Arabic, English, French and Italian.

He received a License in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies and then went on to receive a doctorate in dogmatic theology at Granada. He has taught Islamic studies in Khartoum and in Cairo. In 2012 he was appointed Secretary for the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue by Pope Benedict.

On 19 March 2016 he was ordained a bishop by Pope Francis in the Vatican Basilica. He was named a Cardinal by Pope Francis on 1 September 2019. He has served at the Vatican's principal representative in the continuing dialogue with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb of Al-Azhar mosque in Cairo which was significant in the development of the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Alazhar, Head of Muslim Council of Elders in Abu Dhabi in February 2019. He was appointed to the Higher Committee for the Document on Human Fraternity working with other religious leaders to promote and apply the Document around the globe.

Professor Mohamed Hussein Mahrasawi, President of Al-Azhar University



Professor Mahrasawi is the acting President of the Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt's oldest university founded in 970 by the Fatimids and renowned as "Sunni Islam's most prestigious university".

Having graduated from the Faculty of Arabic Languages from Al-Azhar University in 1985, he earned a Masters and PHD with distinction. He then became a professor in the linguistic department and later appointed the Dean of the faculty for men in 2013. He has contributed in promoting the mission of Al-Azhar by participating in several international conferences and organizing training sessions of the Arabic language with organizations such as the National Centre for Judicial Studies, and the Islamic Cultural Center in Al Giza.

Professor Mahrasawi is a published author and has been responsible for contributing to the evolution of the Arabic language curriculum at Al Azhar University, King Khalid University in Abha, The University of Tabuk, and King Saud University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Rabbi M. Bruce Lustig, Senior Rabbi at Washington Hebrew Congregation



Ordained at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Rabbi M. Bruce Lustig is a Senior Rabbi at Washington Hebrew Congregation Washington, D.C.'s largest and oldest synagogue. There he has served the community for more than 30 years leading a congregation with more than 2,800 families and has held leadership roles in both local and national Jewish communities.

Rabbi M. Bruce Lustig's upbringing in Nashville, Tennessee instilled in him a lifelong commitment towards interfaith work, including his efforts to open dialogue and strengthen relationships among members of all faiths. He is a proactive leader of the city's interfaith community and has organized the nation's first Abrahamic Summit, bringing together Christians, Jews, and Muslims for open dialogue.

Rabbi M. Bruce Lustig has served on the Washington, D.C. Mayor's Faith Advisory Board and as the National Liaison for National Day of Prayer. He has received a medal of honour from King Mohammed VI for his leadership on inter-religious cooperation. He serves on the steering committee of The Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Society. Newsweek has recognized him as one of "America's most influential Rabbis".

He earned a bachelor's degree with honors from the University of Tennessee and holds a Doctor of Divinity and a master's degree in Hebrew letters.

Monsignor Yoannis Lahzi Gaid, Former Personal Secretary of the Holy Father



Monsignor Yoannis Lahzi Gaid, a Coptic Catholic priest. Born in Cairo, he attained his PHD at the Coptic Catholic seminary in Cairo and was ordained priest for the Coptic Catholic Patriarchate of Alexandria, Egypt.

Yoannis Lahzi Gaid travelled to Rome where he studied at the Pontifical Oriental Institute earning a doctorate in Canon Law of the Eastern Churches and graduated from the Ecclesiastical Pontifical Academy. Fluent in Arabic, English, French, and Italian. Monsignor Gaid is the Founder of the St. Peter's Software & Publishing House of the Coptic Catholic Church in Egypt and

Editor in Chief of Alexandria Coptic Catholic website. He has served in various functions for the Vatican Apostolic Nunciatures in Congo, Gabon, Jordan and Iraq and Secretariat of State. Currently he is a former Personal Secretary of the Holy Father, Pope Francis.

Judge Mohamed Mahmoud Abdel Salam, Former Advisor to the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, His Eminence Sheikh Ahmad Al-Tayyeb



Judge Mohamed Mahmoud Abdel Salam graduated from Al-Azhar Al-Sharif University and holds a master's degree of public law comparative to Islamic Sharia. He is a judge at the State Council of Egypt and is a former advisor to His Eminence Dr Ahmed El-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Head of Muslim Council of Elders, a position he held for over eight years. He represented Al-Azhar Al-Sharif in the constitutional assembly charged with drafting a new constitution for Egypt between 2012 and 2013.

Judge Abdel Salam assisted in drafting the *Document on Human Fraternity* and is the Secretary General of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity. He is a Member of the Executive Office of the Muslim Council of Elders, and a Member of Al-Azhar Center for Interreligious Dialogue.

Among the awards he has received are the Medal of the Constitutional Court awarded by Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court, the Community Service Medal awarded by the Ministry of Interior of the UAE, and the *Commenda con Placca dell'Ordine Piano* (Knight Commander with Star of the Order of Pius IX) for his services toward spreading tolerance and interfaith dialogue. He therefore became the first Egyptian,

Arab and Muslim to be awarded this honor.

H.E Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi



His Excellency Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak is a member of the Executive Council of Abu Dhabi, and Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi presiding over the development and growth of the tourism and cultural sectors in Abu Dhabi.

Al Mubarak is also the Chairman for twofour54, the media zone company which ensures the growth and sustainability of the region's media industry. In addition, he holds Chairman positions for Louvre Abu Dhabi and of Aldar Academies, the largest modern education provider in Abu Dhabi. Additionally, Al Mubarak chairs Miral Asset Management and Aldar Properties. He is a graduate of Northeastern University (USA), with a double major in Economics and Political Science.

Dr. Sultan Faisal Al Remeithi, Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Elders



Dr. Sultan Faisal Al Remeithi, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Elders boasts a glittering background as a university professor, novelist, and academic interpreter who has held various managerial positions during his nearly 20 year career.

He holds a PhD in Business Administration from the United Arab Emirates University with his research titled 'Governmental Marketing of Zakah using Social Media Platforms'. He currently holds the position of General Manager of the Publishing Department at Abu Dhabi Media. He previously worked as an Executive Director at the Executive Council in the Government of Ajman for a period of ten years. During that period, he helped formulate and implement various administrative policies aimed at upgrading business performance and improving the efficiency and quality of government work.

Yasser Hareb, Emirati Writer and TV Presenter



Yasser Hareb is a prominent Emirati author, columnist, and television presenter celebrated for his best-selling books and is considered as one of the strongest voices among the young Gulf Arab youth.

Hareb is a member of the Higher Council of Muslims and a member of the Higher National Council for the Year of Tolerance in the UAE. He is also the co-founder of the internationally recognized Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies and has been awarded for his work in tolerance and positivity at the Arab Social Media Influencers Summit.

Before becoming a prominent TV presenter, Hareb worked as journalist in several leading newspapers and is a creator of numerous social impact programs, among them Tarjim, the largest translation initiative in the Arab world and Uktub, a program created to encourage young talent to advance their writing skills. He has published numerous books, including Towards a New Way of Thinking in 2006, and Picasso and Starbucks in 2011, The New Slaves in 2013, and Take off Your Shoes in 2015. He has earned his Bachelor Degree in Management Information Systems from United Arab Emirates University and has graduated from Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Future Leaders Program.

Irina Bokova, Former Director-General Unesco



Irina Bokova graduated from Moscow State Institute of International Relations, was a Fellow at the University of Maryland (College Park), and followed an executive program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government (Harvard University). She began her career at the United Nations Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria. She was elected twice as Member of Parliament, and served as the Government's first Secretary for European affairs.

Irina Bokova was Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, as well as Ambassador of Bulgaria to France, Monaco and UNESCO and Personal Representative of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie. As Director-General of UNESCO from 2009–2017, Irina Bokova was actively engaged in international efforts to advance quality education for all, gender equality, the protection of the world's cultural heritage as a humanitarian imperative and security issue to strengthen the foundations for lasting peace. She launched the global campaign “Unite4Heritage” and global advocacy efforts that lead to the adoption of several resolutions of the United Nations Security Council on the role of heritage for security and peace. She actively promotes culture as a driver for development, along with science diplomacy and cooperation.

Leymah Roberta Gbowee, Liberian Peace Activist and 2011 Nobel Peace Laureate



2011 Nobel Peace Laureate Leymah Roberta Gbowee is a Liberian Peace Activist, trained Social Worker and Women's Rights Advocate, a Humanitarian, a fierce Advocate for Justice, who speaks Truth to Power Without Fear or Favor, an outspoken Supporter, an Advisor for numerous organizations, a highly sought-after Speaker Internationally with her Speeches to advance Women's Rights, and Peace and Security.

Madam Gbowee founded the Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa (GPFA) in 2012. She serves as the current President of GPFA, a foundation that provides outstanding educational and leadership opportunities to over 2,000+ girls, women, and youth in West Africa, Africa, and around the World & GPFA-USA.

Rev. Prof. Dr. Ioan Sauca, General Secretary of World Council of Churches



Reverend Sauca, a priest of the Orthodox Church in Romania, currently serves as the acting General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Since 1998, Reverend Sauca has been a Professor of Missiology and Ecumenical Theology at Bossey Ecumenical Institute and has served as its Director since 2011.

Reverend Sauca previously served as a WCC deputy general secretary, where he oversaw a variety of WCC programs in the areas of unity, mission, ecumenical relations, youth, interreligious dialogue and cooperation, worship and spirituality, as well as ecumenical formation.

Saucu studied in the Theological Faculties in Sibiu and Bucharest, Romania, and earned his doctorate degree in Theology at the University of Birmingham, UK. He is also an alumnus of the Graduate School at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey.

Zayed Award for Human Fraternity

The Zayed Award for Human Fraternity was inspired by the signing of the Document on Human Fraternity by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Head of Muslim Council of Elders in the UAE on 4 February 2019. The award recognizes above all those who build bridges connecting divided peoples, strengthening the real human relationships that make possible the work of ensuring freedom and safety for all. In addition, the Zayed Award honors the values of the Founder of the UAE, the late Sheikh Zayed, who lived a life of peaceful coexistence. The ambition of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity is that winners come from all parts of the world and from all walks of life. Any individual or entity that has made a profound contribution to the facilitation of human fraternity can be nominated for the award. The prize for the Award consists in 1 million USD as well as a trophy, a certificate and a pin.

Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Head of Muslim Council of Elders, were the first recipients of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity in 2019. It was later revealed that Pope Francis donated the full amount of the award to the Rohingya people from Myanmar. During the first anniversary celebrations of the signing of the Document on Human Fraternity, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan announced that the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity would become an annual event.

Nominations are accepted from past recipients of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity, parliaments, governments, members of governments or heads of state (past or present), heads of supreme courts, university presidents, directors of peace research institutes and centers, heads of religious and cultural institutions, current and former members of the Higher Committee for Human Fraternity, religious leaders and public figures playing an active role in societies or prominent intellectuals who are known for their efforts in serving the cause of human fraternity, heads of international organizations or heads of the United Nations' offices and organizations.

An independent jury to select the award recipients is composed of celebrated figures serving in public duty from around the world. Members of the selection committee are: former President of the Central African Republic Catherine Samba-Panza, former Vice-president of Indonesia Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, the 27th Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada Michaëlle Jean, Cardinal Dominique Mamberti Cardinal, serving in the Vatican's Supreme Tribunal, and Adama Dieng a former UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide.


The award is given as part of the International Day of Human Fraternity, which the United Nations General Assembly declared in recognition of the ongoing efforts of leaders and religious figures cooperating to promote peace, harmony and intercultural dialogue in the world. Nominees for the 2021 award came from 30 countries and represented humanitarian organizations throughout the world. They will be awarded during a virtual event broadcast on the second anniversary of the signing of the historic Document on Human Fraternity, and the first International Day of Human Fraternity, 4 February 2021.

Nominations for the 2022 Zayed Award for Human Fraternity will be accepted from July to December 2021.

Promotional Materials for the International Day of Human Fraternity

Logo, posters and Holy Father speech in the Plain of Ur, 6 March 2021, are available in various languages. ([Link](#))





The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO IRAQ
 [5-8 March 2021]

INTERRELIGIOUS MEETING

Plain of Ur
Saturday, 6 March 2021

Video

This video is available in various languages. ([Link](#))

