



DICASTERY
FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Christians and Shinto Followers Praying for a Peaceful Society

MESSAGE TO FOLLOWERS OF SHINTO
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW YEAR 2023

Vatican City

Dear Shinto Friends,

1. As we approach the New Year festivities with their various traditions and expressions of hope, we wish each one of you much joy and happiness. We offer heartfelt greetings to the followers of Shinto and to all the Japanese people visiting Shinto shrines in order to pray for peace and prosperity. It has become customary for Catholics around the world to be spiritually united with the Holy Father on New Year's Day as he offers his greetings and prays for peace throughout the world.

2. On such days, Pope Francis frequently calls attention to the tragedies that afflict our world. Today, many are stricken by the crises of climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic, and by the physical, psychological, economic and social maladies they continue to cause. The reality of war also looms over the world. "Even now, brothers and sisters, we see peoples rising up against peoples and we witness with trepidation the vast expansion of conflicts and the calamity of war, which causes the death of so many innocent people and multiplies the poison of hatred" (Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis at Mass for the Sixth World Day of the Poor, 13 November 2022).

3. While the Japanese people have suffered greatly from the horrors of war, they have also emphasized the benefits of peace, establishing it as a constitutional foundation for their wellbeing. They find inspiration in the ancient Shinto prayers (norito) that affirm the importance of harmony and that repeatedly ask for the gift of peace. Shinto believers readily share this concern for the world. After participating in the remarkable Interreligious Encounter of Prayer for World Peace, held in Assisi (Italy) on 27 October 1986, Shinto representatives have regularly joined the annual Meeting of Prayer for Peace convened by the Saint Egidio Community of Rome in various European cities as well as the annual Summit of Religions for World Peace, held at Mount Hiei (Kyoto).

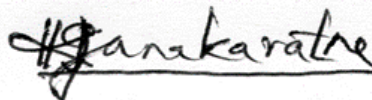
4. Dear friends, religions are indeed part of the solution to the present crises, for "faith leads a believer to see in the other a brother or sister to be supported and loved" (Document on Human Fraternity, 4 February 2019). It is fitting that we, Christians and followers of Shinto, nurture an intense aspiration for the peace of the whole human family, and, in a particular way, for those facing instability due to the evils of war, terrorism or endemic poverty. In the name of universal fraternity, let us draw upon the riches of our religious traditions in order to foster a culture and spirit of conviviality, and to inspire believers to uproot the causes of conflict, build bridges of dialogue, speak up for the downtrodden and spread words of healing and reconciliation.

5. “May we work together to advance towards a new horizon of love and peace, of fraternity and solidarity, of mutual support and acceptance. May we never yield to the temptation to disregard others, especially those in greatest need, and to look the other way; instead, may we strive daily, in concrete and practical ways, ‘to form a community composed of brothers and sisters who accept and care for one another’” (Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 2021 World Day of Peace).

6. United together in this hope and in this commitment to peace at the beginning of a New Year, we wish you once again the gift of peace and all that flows from it. AKEMASHITE OMEDETŌ GOZAIMASU!



Miguel Ángel Cardinal Ayuso Guixot, MCCJ
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