



DICASTERY
FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Bearers of Peace and Hope in Our Time

MESSAGE TO FOLLOWERS OF SHINTO
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW YEAR 2026

Vatican City

Dear Shinto Friends,
“Peace be with you all!”

I wish to greet you with the words that His Holiness Pope Leo XIV used to express the theme of his first World Peace Message: “Peace be with you all: Towards an unarmed and disarming peace.” With this appeal, which echoes those of the Risen Lord Jesus, the Holy Father invites all humanity to reject the logic of violence and war and to embrace an authentic peace founded on love and justice.

As we welcome a new year, we extend to you our heartfelt wishes for peace and prosperity. We join spiritually with the millions of pilgrims who visit Shinto shrines at this time, offering gratitude and prayers for renewal. This ancient tradition of welcoming the year with purity of heart and harmony with nature resonates deeply with our Christian hope for a world reconciled in peace.

This New Year coincides with the conclusion of both the Jubilee Year of Hope and the sixtieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. That historic document continues to inspire dialogue and friendship between believers of different faiths. It reminds us of our shared calling to foster unity and love among peoples and nations. It also encourages every religious tradition to respond creatively to the restlessness of the human heart, to sustain life and to offer meaning amid the challenges of our time.

In a world increasingly marked by uncertainty, fragmentation and loss of spiritual direction, the world’s religious traditions stand as enduring bearers of hope and wisdom. They help humanity to discern the path toward reconciliation, harmony and meaning amidst suffering and joy, life and death, good and evil (cf. *Nostra Aetate*, 2). In drawing wisdom from our respective sacred sources, we discover that faith is not an escape from the world’s trials, but a wellspring of courage and creativity that transforms them. When shared in dialogue, this spiritual insight becomes a gift to the whole human family, nurturing mutual understanding and inspiring practical cooperation for the healing of humanity and the earth. Among the many urgent challenges before us, the ethical use of artificial intelligence particularly calls for the moral wisdom and discernment of all religious traditions; by grounding technology in compassion and responsibility, we can ensure that progress serves the dignity of every person and the harmony of creation.

Dear friends, as seekers of peace in our time, we share a sacred responsibility – namely, “to bring hope to a humanity that is often tempted by despair” (*Address Celebrating the Sixtieth Anniversary of Nostra Aetate “Walking Together In Hope,”* 28 October 2025). Guided by the light of our respective traditions, we are “to help our people to break free from the chains of prejudice, anger and hatred; to help them rise above egoism and self-centeredness; to help them overcome the greed that destroys both the human spirit and the earth” (ibid.). May this shared mission guide our steps, so that together we may continue to cultivate harmony, reverence for life and a peace that disarms the heart. With renewed sentiments of esteem and friendship, we extend to you once again our most sincere wishes for a blessed and prosperous 2026.

Akemashite omedetō gozaimasu!

Vatican, 15 December 2025



Cardinal George Jacob Koovakad
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