News

Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, the Vatican's permanent observer to the United Nations, present

Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, the Vatican's permanent observer to the United Nations, presents the Path to Peace Award to Jordan's King Abdullah II and his wife, Queen Rania, May 9, 2022, in New York City. (CNS photo/Joe Vericker via Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations)



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NEW YORK — Jordan's King Abdullah II and Queen Rania were honored May 9 with the annual Path to Peace Award from the foundation that supports the work of the Vatican Mission to the United Nations.

Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, Vatican ambassador to the U.N., presented the award during the 29th annual gala of the Path to Peace Foundation.

The foundation supports the work of the Vatican's Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations. Archbishop Caccia is its president.

The archbishop commended the royal couple for their yearslong effort to promote peace and interfaith cooperation in the Middle East.

The archbishop pointed to King Abdullah's commitment to religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue, particularly his work to safeguard Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jordan as a primary reason for presenting the award.

He also cited the king's initiation in 2004 of the "Amman Message," which stated that terrorism has no place in Islam, and his 2010 proposal for an annual World Interfaith Harmony Week, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

The week is observed Feb. 1-7 annually.

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Queen Rania, Archbishop Caccia said, has long shown "concern for the questions of education, connectivity and cross-cultural dialogue, as well as sustainability, the environment and migration," which "places young people at the heart of solutions and is imbued with a sense of hope."

In accepting the award, King Abdullah said he did so on behalf of "Jordanians, men and women, young people and elders, Muslims and Christians alike."

"Our journey on the path to peace must travel through Jerusalem," the king said. He noted that the city also is home to many Arab Christians, who are part of the oldest Christian community in the world.

King Abdullah stressed that it is vital for the international community to protect their presence in Jerusalem.

"Jerusalem is key to the future of peace and stability that we all seek" and "should be an anchor for peace and coexistence, not for fear and violence," he said, calling for an end to violence and suffering.

He called on the international community to work toward a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land through a two-state solution that would lead to "the establishment of an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side-by-side with Israel in peace and security."

King Abdullah reiterated the need for mutual respect, cooperation and shared humanity in shaping a better world. Further, he said, the world's most difficult challenges "will not be solved by material goods, nor by working in silos."

"They will be met by drawing on our faith in God, our common humanity, and our will to jointly defeat poverty and despair, end occupation and injustice, help

refugees everywhere return home, ready to rebuild shattered communities, and renew the hope that young people everywhere so desperately need," the king said.