Vatican
Vatican News
Pope Francis speaks into a microphone with a man in a suit and a man in a red zucchetto look

Pope Francis speaks May 4, 2023, at the Vatican, to Catholic and Muslim leaders who were meeting in Rome for a colloquium between the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue and the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, which is based in Amman, Jordan. Looking on, in the background, is Jordan's Prince El Hassan bin Talal, who founded the institute, and, in the foreground, Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, prefect of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Carol Glatz

View Author Profile

Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Vatican City — May 4, 2023
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Interreligious dialogue requires sincerity and mutual respect to be fruitful, Pope Francis told Christian and Muslim leaders.

It also requires "the awareness of both convergences and divergences" between different faiths, he said, but with emphasis on "what unites us on a religious and spiritual level as well as on an ethical-moral level."

The pope met May 4 with Catholic and Muslim leaders gathered in Rome for the sixth colloquium between the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue and the Royal

Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, which is based in Amman, Jordan.

Jordan's Prince El Hassan bin Talal founded the institute in 1994 to promote "common human and ethical values that contribute to strengthening cooperation and interfaith relations" and to rectify misconceptions about others, according to the institute's website.

In his remarks to those attending the colloquium, Francis praised the "enlightened leadership" of the prince and the institute's work regarding "the preservation and enhancement of the Arab Christian heritage."

"I can but express further gratitude, because this not only benefits the Christian citizens of yesterday and today, but also protects and consolidates this heritage throughout the Middle East, so diverse and rich in ethnicities, religions, cultures, languages and traditions," he said.

Advertisement

"It is indeed a matter of jealously preserving each piece of this beautiful mosaic," which would benefit from closely cooperating with other Christian institutes that have the same goal, he added.

Francis also expressed his "appreciation and gratitude" to the prince's uncle, Jordan's King Abdullah II, "for his attention to the Christian communities not only in his country, but also those of the Middle East, especially in times marked by conflicts and violence."

"His majesty does not tire of repeating that the Christians of those blessed lands are natives, meaning they live where their ancestors lived for long centuries," the pope said.

The pope also told his guests that he has been updated about "the tragedy in Turkey and northern Syria," which had been hit by two devastating earthquakes Feb. 6, killing more than 59,000 people and causing tens of billions of dollars in direct physical damage.

"Our heart, too, is close to the many people who have suffered as a result of this terrible earthquake. Let us pray for them and do our best to help them. There are Muslims, Christians, our brothers and sisters," he said.