



## Contents

Editorial: The Need for Inter-Religious Dialogue .....	3
Poverty and Riches in Africa: A Closer Look with Solidarity <i>Emmanuel Foro, SJ</i> .....	8
A Philosophical Look at Transhumanism <i>John Kennedy Philip, SDB</i> .....	16
Wellsprings of Human Dignity and Fraternity in Other Religions <i>Jismi Joseph, CSSE</i> .....	33
Love Knows No Bounds: An Existential Experience <i>Emmanuel Akilan, SJ</i> .....	42



*AUC: Asian Journal of Religious Studies* (formerly *Apostolic Union for Clergy*) is a peer-reviewed pastoral journal for Christian leaders. It is a bimonthly published from the Papal Seminary, Pune 411014. Inspiring and brief pastoral and academic articles beneficial for Christian leaders are welcome.

Editor: Kuruvilla Pandikattu SJ  
Ass Editor: T. Karimundackal SJ  
Circulation: Stephen Jayard  
Book Review: Biju Joseph SJ  
*Section Editors:*  
Pastoral Theology: Stephen Jayard  
Christology: Francis Gonsalves SJ  
Scripture: Mariapushpam Paulraj  
Homiletics, Liturgy: VM Jose SJ  
Moral Theology: Nishant Irudayadason  
Counselling: D. Braganza & V. Crasta  
Religions: Sebastian Vazhapilly SJ  
Spirituality: Patras Kujur SJ  
Philosophy: Nishant Irudayadason  
Management: Bhausahab Sansare SJ  
Finance: VM Jose SJ  
Publisher: Kuruvilla Pandikattu SJ

For **all editorial members**, please see [www.punejournal.co.in](http://www.punejournal.co.in)

Printed at: Kunal Offset, 412, Kakasaheb Gadgil Rd, Shaniwar  
Peth, Pune 411030: Mob 98230 48871

Typeset at: Papal Seminary Centenary Computer Centre

Donations are accepted. Cheques and DD to be drawn in favour of  
**Apostolic Union**

*Address all correspondence to:*

The Editor, AUC, Papal Seminary, Pune 411014, India

Email: [auc@papalseminary.in](mailto:auc@papalseminary.in) or Site: [punejournal.co.in](http://punejournal.co.in)

ISSN: P-2249-1503 | E-2582-791X





## **Editorial**

# **The Need for Inter-Religious Dialogue**

---

Religious plurality is described as “a manifestation of the wisdom of God’s will in creation” in a proclamation made at the interreligious conference in Kazakhstan that Pope Francis attended in September 2022.

On September 15, 2022, in Nur-Sultan, the capital city, the 35-point proclamation was “approved by the majority of the participants” of the Seventh Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions (Brockhaus, 2022).

During his journey to the nation of Central Asia from September 13 to 15, Pope Francis took part in the opening and closing rituals of the interreligious summit.

The three-day meeting was attended by about 100 participants from across the globe, including Cardinal Pietro Parolin, secretary of state at the Vatican, and Cardinal Miguel Angel Ayuso Guixot, head of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

”We observe that diversity and variances in religion, skin colour, gender, ethnicity, and language are reflections of the wisdom of God’s will in creation,” the declaration’s tenth point said. Therefore,

Cite as: Pandikattu, Kuruvilla. (2022). The Need for Inter-Religious Dialogue (Version 1.0). *AUC: Asian Journal of Religious Studies*, Sept-Oct 2022 (67/5, 3-7).  
<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6853230>

any instance of force to adhere to a certain religion and its teaching is inappropriate.

The proclamation also made reference to the Human Fraternity Document for World Peace and Coexistence, which was signed in February 2019 in Abu Dhabi by Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmed Al Tayyeb, the grand imam of al-Azhar.

The document between the Holy See and Al-Azhar Al-Sharif calls for “peace, dialogue, mutual understanding, and mutual respect among believers for the common good,” the Kazakhstan declaration said, adding that “we recognise the importance and value of the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together.”

The document between the Holy See and Al-Azhar Al-Sharif calls for “peace, dialogue, mutual understanding, and mutual respect among believers for the common good.”

The proclamation also urged greater engagement of women in religion and society while denouncing terrorism and calling for an end to war “in all corners of our planet.”

The proclamation claimed that since tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding are the foundation of every religious teaching, “we proceed from the unchanging reality that the Almighty made all individuals equal, regardless of their racial, religious, ethnic, or other affiliation or social position.”

We place a lot of emphasis on the need of preserving the institution of the family, it said.

Francis went on to deliver a speech after showing up at the cathedral for his own meeting with the area’s clergy and lay leaders in which he indirectly dismissed some of Schneider’s concerns and reaffirmed his view that Catholics should continue actively collaborating with other faiths.

The pope said, “We also need others, all others: our Christian sisters and brothers of other confessions, those who practise other religions than we do, all men and women of good will. “May we learn, in a spirit of humility, that we can only genuinely accomplish anything good for the benefit of everyone together in discourse and mutual acceptance.”

The pope emphasised that Catholicism is neither an antiquated religion nor locked off to the outside world, urging those gathered in the cathedral to avoid “rigidity, dogmatism, and moralising” and to be receptive to fresh approaches of sharing the faith in the contemporary day.

Francis said that the goal of the church is to “be a community open...to the newness of the Spirit and to the signs of the times, not a group bogged down in the same old way of doing things, or withdrawn into its shell because it feels tiny.”

The pope pointed out that, despite the fact that just 1% of the country’s population is Catholic, Christianity has been practised in Central Asia since the earliest centuries, and there has long been active missionary activity there.

It “is not about looking back with nostalgia, becoming caught in the past, and allowing oneself be immobilised and inert,” the pope reminded them, in reference to spreading the faith today.

He cautioned, “When we do that, we are inclined to go backward.”

By stating that Catholic seminaries “should be ‘schools of honesty,’ not places of rigidity and formality, but training grounds in truth, openness, and sharing,” the pope also issued a direct challenge to the education of young priests (White, 2022).

Faith, he continued, “is an ever-present experience, an encounter with Christ that takes place in the here and now of our lives, not a gorgeous museum of relics from a distant past.” “Therefore, we cannot spread it by merely saying the same things over and over

again, but rather by sharing the Gospel's freshness. Faith continues to exist and has a future in this manner."

Long applause and shouts of "viva il Papa" ("Long live the pope!") greeted the pope's comments.

Inspired by Pope's call for dialogue, we have taken up some articles on dialogue and exchange among cultures, science and religion in this issue of *AUC: Pune Journal of Religious Studies*. May ours be a life of openness, curiosity and dialogue, so that we can enable an all-inclusive world!

That is truly the need of the hour. In spite of the tremendous technological and scientific marvels, we have not learnt to cherish our collective spiritual wisdom. In spite of our prosperity, we have not learnt to work for peace. In spite of our progress in knowledge, we have not learnt the wisdom of collective living. In spite of our religiosity, we have not learnt the moral and ethical art of living together as brothers and sisters.

As Martin Luther King reminds us, that is precisely the need of the hour! We need to learn to live as brothers and sisters or we will collectively perish together as fools. For this common living in brotherhood and sistershood, we need religious and spiritual wisdom that makes us embrace the other (belonging to different religions, traditions, cultures and identities). Without this acceptance of the other as other, we are doomed to perish!

Thus religions have to assert their own unique identities and at the same time reach out to other religions and traditions with respect and reverence. That is precisely what the Pope is trying to do. If we get lost in our own particular religion at the expense of the other, we will be too self-obsessed. If we are too much concerned of the other without belonging to our own tradition, we will be uprooted.

The Editor

## References

- Brockhaus, H. (2022, September 15). *Final declaration of Kazakhstan conference condemns 'coercion to a particular religion'*. Catholic News Agency. [https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/252298 /kazakhstan-interreligious-congress-adopts- declaration-calling-religious-pluralism- gods-will](https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/252298/kazakhstan-interreligious-congress-adopts-declaration-calling-religious-pluralism-gods-will)
- White, C. (2022, September 15). *Kazakhstan bishop says Pope Francis' participation in interfaith summit potentially 'dangerous'*. National Catholic Reporter. [https://www .ncronline.org/news/vatican /kazakhstan-bishop-says-pope-francis- participation-interfaith-summit-potentially](https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican /kazakhstan-bishop-says-pope-francis- participation-interfaith-summit-potentially)



© by the authors. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license. (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)