

*St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity
Cornwall, P.E.I.*

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI FRATERNITY NEWSLETTER

December 2019

VOLUME XXXI NO. 12

HUMAN FRATERNITY FOR WORLD PEACE AND LIVING TOGETHER

As 2019 draws to a close, we take some time to reflect on the past year and make resolutions to guide us in the coming year. In this context, it may be worthwhile to reflect on the document signed on February 4, 2019 by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb in Abu Dhabi on “Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together”. It is most significant that this inaugural encounter between Pope Francis and Ahmed el-Tayed occurred on the 800th anniversary of the encounter between Saint Francis and Sultan al-Kamil.



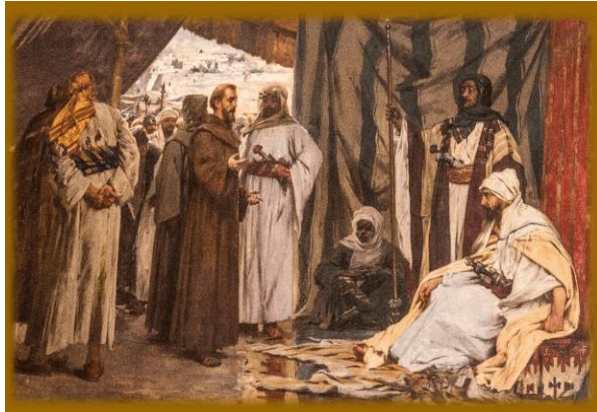
In its introduction, the document “invites all persons who have faith in God and faith in human fraternity to unite and work together so that it may serve as a guide for future generations to advance a culture of mutual respect in the awareness of the great divine grace that makes all human beings brothers and sisters.” Having reflected on the level of poverty, conflict and suffering in different parts of the world, Pope Francis and the Grand Imam assert that “believers are called to express this human fraternity by safeguarding creation and the entire universe and supporting all persons, especially the poorest and those most in need.



As Franciscan sisters and brothers, may we all take some time to assess our efforts in building fraternity in favor of a more peaceful world for all generations to come.

(The full text of the document is attached to this newsletter as Attachment 2)

Formation



This year marks the 800th anniversary of St. Francis' meeting with the Islam leader, Sultan Malek al-Kamil, in 1219. Francis had travelled to Damietta, Egypt, the site of the 5th Crusade. He tried to convince the Crusaders to abandon the siege of Damietta, and when that failed, he crossed through the lines of the Crusaders to the Muslims. He spent 3 days in the Muslim camp and met with the Sultan. Francis and al-Kamil were extraordinary men of peace who transcended their differences and learned from each other.

At the fraternity meeting of December 8, the ongoing formation session will feature a dialogue between Francis and the Sultan al-Kamil.

Franciscans know much about the life story of St. Francis. In preparation for the Dec 8th fraternity meeting, it is recommended that you use the Internet to learn more about the benevolent and pious Sultan al-Kamil.

Justice, Peace and Care of Creation

At the November fraternity meeting, the JPIC team introduced the first five of the 10 Ecological Commandments (Part 1). We are all aware of the Ten Commandments given by God through Moses. The commandments on a whole can be considered as a set of guiding principles relating to ethics and worship. It is interesting to note that, in the Bible, God included creation, setting the stage with the story of creation. The JPIC team invites the fraternity to look at our responsibility toward God's sacred creation in the light of the ten ecological commandments, and ethical principles based on our Franciscan understanding of the Gospel way of life.



First Five Ecological Commandments

1. You shall have the God of sharing, the God of protecting the planet for future generations and the God of wise choices. Their opposites are greed, stealing from those who come after us and destroying the dignity of creatures.
2. You shall honor all of God's creation, the Earth and all its beings. You shall find ways of living that reflect the goodness and integrity of creation.

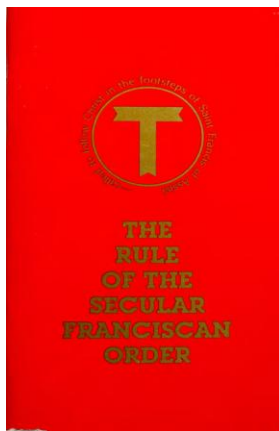
3. You shall keep the Sabbath holy by using the Sabbath Day as an opportunity to look back on our week, as an opportunity to restore hope, as a time to share with the poor and an awareness that nothing really belongs to any individual.
4. Honor Father and Mother God by being conscious of all they do, of all they have created for us. Honor Mother God with awareness I have come from Mother Earth and I will return to Mother Earth.
5. You shall not kill the Earth with asking it to accept excessive waste. You shall try to monitor your waste cart and educate yourself where this waste is originating.

Prayer and Action

Please take time for reflection and action on the first five ecological commandments listed above. Take time to pray, reflect, and act on them. How can you adapt them to your way of life?

History of OFS Rule

The on-going formation session at the November 10th fraternity meeting was a presentation by Doug Clorey and Minister Tom Wilkinson on “**The History of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO).**” Council has received complimentary feedback from many members who spoke about how they felt truly grounded in their profession after learning about how the Rule has developed over the centuries. Below are the highlights of the presentation.



- The Franciscan family consists of three Orders: the First Order (Apostolic), the Second Order (Monastic) and the Third Order (Penitential). The Secular Franciscan Order evolved out of the Third Order of St. Francis. It was noted that all three Orders of the Franciscan family have a common rule: “*To observe the Gospel, each according to their own condition of life.*”
- Doug explained that St. Francis was part of a tradition of lay penitents, called the Order of Penitents, that dates back to the 3rd century. As the number of lay penitents grew during the time of Francis, it became necessary to give some structure to the movement. This came in a number of forms over the centuries, beginning in 1215 with the *Letter to All the Faithful* and, in 1221, with the Rule “*Memoriale Propositi*” established by Cardinal Ugolino. New Rules were subsequently promulgated in 1289 (“*Supra Montem*” by Pope Nicholas IV), 1883 (“*Misericors Dei Filius*” by Pope Leo XIII) and in 1978 (“*Seraphicus Patriarcha*” by Pope Paul VI). Doug explained the characteristics of the various versions of the Rule.
- Tom explained that Vatican II (1962-65), under Pope John XXIII, launched the need for a new Rule for the Third Order of St. Francis that reflected the modern reality. He gave personal testimony of the decade-long struggle, and the inclusion of the laity, to finally realize the Pauline Rule of 1978.
- The fraternity members broke into small groups to reflect and share their reactions to the presentation and Doug provided everyone with a handout chart of the “Genealogy, Chronology and Structure of the Franciscan Family.” (see Attachment 1)
- The fraternity was very appreciative of the time and effort of Doug and Tom in researching and effectively presenting this session.

Upper Room Ministry

Members of the St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity prepared a delicious noon meal of Shepherd's Pie, dinner rolls, dessert and coffee at the Upper Room soup kitchen on Saturday, November 23.

A total of 13 members worked in 2 shifts to serve about 70 hungry people. The 8:30 a.m. shift peeled and cut up potatoes, carrots and onions and got everything cooking. The 10:30 a.m. shift continued the cooking, served the meal, and cleaned up. Our thanks go to Leonard and the Outreach / Special Events Team for taking the lead in organizing this fraternity project.



"4 a-peeling men"

Annual Fraternity Retreat 2020 - Change of Date

The date for next year's annual retreat will be **Sept. 25-27, 2020** at **Our Lady of Hope Retreat Centre**. The fraternity council felt that moving the date of the retreat away from the Feast of St. Francis would allow greater participation from fraternities that organize their own observance of that feast day. Council also felt that this change would make it easier to book a Franciscan to facilitate the retreat. We were able to exchange dates with another organization that had previously booked Sept. 25-27.

December Birthdays

December 20	Carol MacNeill-Longaphie
December 27	Martha Gabriel

Happy Birthday Carol and Martha! Blessings to you and your families.

Lunch Schedule

Carol MacNeill-Longaphie
Doug and Marion Clorey

Newsletter

Newsletter items are always welcome. You may send them before the last Wednesday of the month to Doug Clorey at jdclorey@bellaliant.net.

Upcoming Events

Fraternity Meeting - Sunday, December 8 at 2:00 pm in St. Francis of Assisi parish centre, Cornwall.

Fraternity Meeting Dates for 2020 in St. Francis of Assisi parish centre, Cornwall

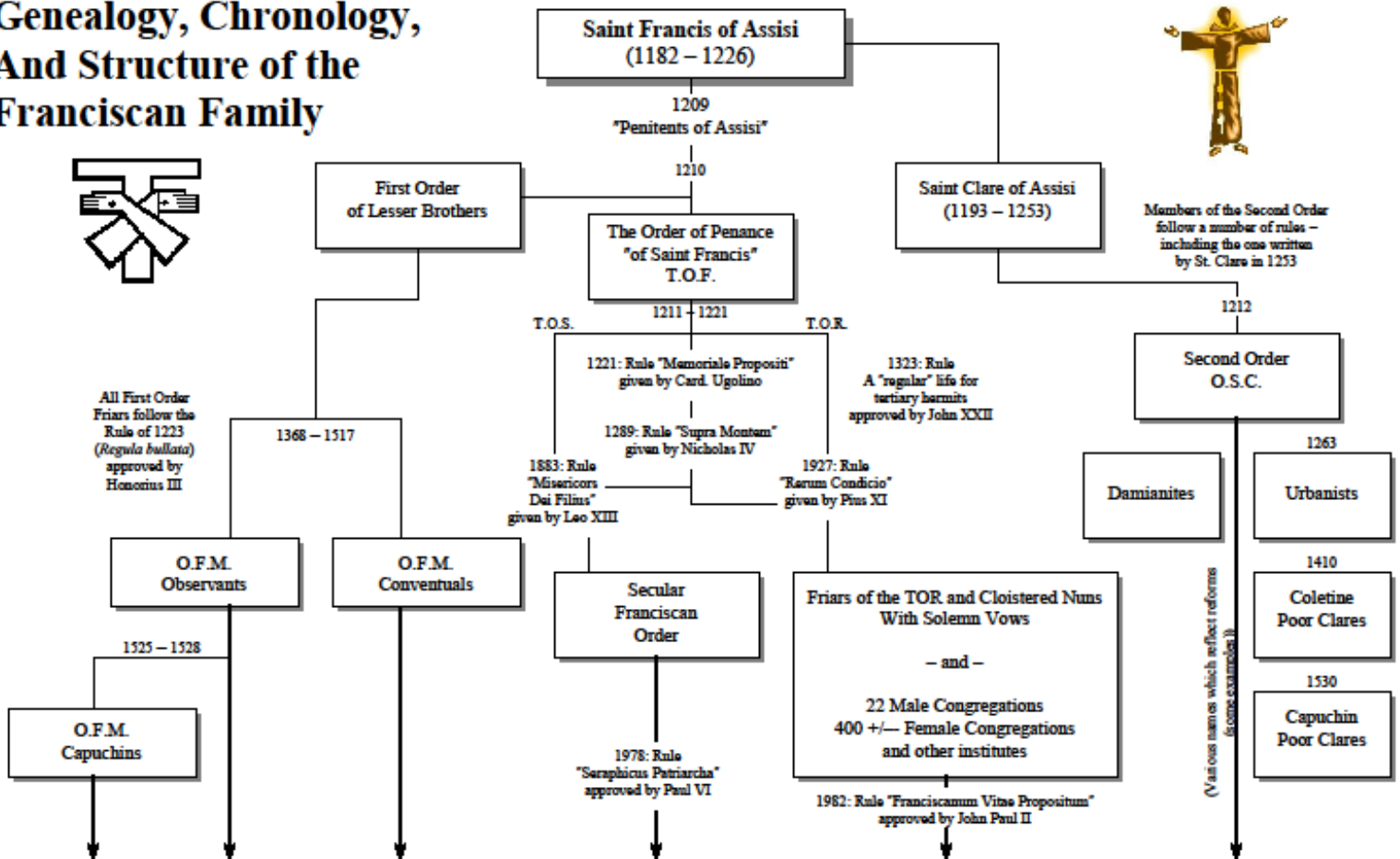
Sunday, January 12	2-4 p.m.	
Sunday, February 9	2-4 p.m.	
Sunday, March 8	2-4 p.m.	
Sunday, April 5		7-9 p.m. (Note: the first Sunday of the month)
Sunday, May 3		7-9 p.m. (Note: the first Sunday of the month)
Sunday, June 14		7-9 p.m.
Sunday, July 12		7-9 p.m.
August: no fraternity meeting (annual picnic)		
Sunday, September 13		7-9 p.m.
October: no fraternity meeting (annual retreat)		
Sunday, November 8	2-4 p.m.	
Sunday, December 13	2-4 p.m.	

BLESSED ADVENT TO ALL!

Genealogy, Chronology, And Structure of the Franciscan Family



Members of the Second Order follow a number of rules – including the one written by St. Clare in 1253



The Order of Friars Minor is made up of men and, according to tradition and law of the Church is also known as the "First Order". (Cf. *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, Canon 303, p. 246.)

The Order of Penance, also known as "Third Order" has a mixed composition. It is made up of men and women, lay and religious. It is "secular" (with men and women living in their own houses) and "religious" (men and women in living community with the profession of vows).

The "Second Order" or the "Poor Clares" is made up of women who are usually cloistered.

HUMAN FRATERNITY FOR WORLD PEACE AND LIVING TOGETHER

INTRODUCTION

Faith leads a believer to see in the other a brother or sister to be supported and loved. Through faith in God, who has created the universe, creatures and all human beings (equal on account of his mercy), believers are called to express this human fraternity by safeguarding creation and the entire universe and supporting all persons, especially the poorest and those most in need.

This transcendental value served as the starting point for several meetings characterized by a friendly and fraternal atmosphere where we shared the joys, sorrows and problems of our contemporary world. We did this by considering scientific and technical progress, therapeutic achievements, the digital era, the mass media and communications. We reflected also on the level of poverty, conflict and suffering of so many brothers and sisters in different parts of the world as a consequence of the arms race, social injustice, corruption, inequality, moral decline, terrorism, discrimination, extremism and many other causes.

From our fraternal and open discussions, and from the meeting that expressed profound hope in a bright future for all human beings, the idea of this Document on *Human Fraternity* was conceived. It is a text that has been given honest and serious thought so as to be a joint declaration of good and heartfelt aspirations. It is a document that invites all persons who have faith in God and faith in *human fraternity* to unite and work together so that it may serve as a guide for future generations to advance a culture of mutual respect in the awareness of the great divine grace that makes all human beings brothers and sisters.

DOCUMENT

In the name of God who has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and who has called them to live together as brothers and sisters, to fill the earth and make known the values of goodness, love and peace;

In the name of innocent human life that God has forbidden to kill, affirming that whoever kills a person is like one who kills the whole of humanity, and that whoever saves a person is like one who saves the whole of humanity;

In the name of the poor, the destitute, the marginalized and those most in need whom God has commanded us to help as a duty required of all persons, especially the wealthy and of means;

In the name of orphans, widows, refugees and those exiled from their homes and their countries; in the name of all victims of wars, persecution and injustice; in the name of the weak, those who live in fear, prisoners of war and those tortured in any part of the world, without distinction;

In the name of peoples who have lost their security, peace, and the possibility of living together, becoming victims of destruction, calamity and war;

In the name of *human fraternity* that embraces all human beings, unites them and renders them equal;

In the name of this *fraternity* torn apart by policies of extremism and division, by systems of unrestrained profit or by hateful ideological tendencies that manipulate the actions and the future of men and women;

In the name of freedom, that God has given to all human beings creating them free and distinguishing them by this gift;

In the name of justice and mercy, the foundations of prosperity and the cornerstone of faith;

In the name of all persons of good will present in every part of the world;

In the name of God and of everything stated thus far; Al-Azhar al-Sharif and the Muslims of the East and West, together with the Catholic Church and the Catholics of the East and West, declare the adoption of a culture of dialogue as the path; mutual cooperation as the code of conduct; reciprocal understanding as the method and standard.

We, who believe in God and in the final meeting with Him and His judgment, on the basis of our religious and moral responsibility, and through this Document, call upon ourselves, upon the leaders of the world as well as the architects of international policy and world economy, to work strenuously to spread the culture of tolerance and of living together in peace; to intervene at the earliest opportunity to stop the shedding of innocent blood and bring an end to wars, conflicts, environmental decay and the moral and cultural decline that the world is presently experiencing.

We call upon intellectuals, philosophers, religious figures, artists, media professionals and men and women of culture in every part of the world, to rediscover the values of peace, justice, goodness, beauty, human fraternity and coexistence in order to confirm the importance of these values as anchors of salvation for all, and to promote them everywhere.

This Declaration, setting out from a profound consideration of our contemporary reality, valuing its successes and in solidarity with its suffering, disasters and calamities, believes firmly that among the most important causes of the crises of the modern world are a desensitized human conscience, a distancing from religious values and a prevailing individualism accompanied by materialistic philosophies that deify the human person and introduce worldly and material values in place of supreme and transcendental principles.

While recognizing the positive steps taken by our modern civilization in the fields of science, technology, medicine, industry and welfare, especially in developed countries, we wish to emphasize that, associated with such historic advancements, great and valued as they are, there exists both a moral deterioration that influences international action and a weakening of spiritual values and responsibility. All this contributes to a general feeling of frustration, isolation and

desperation leading many to fall either into a vortex of atheistic, agnostic or religious extremism, or into blind and fanatic extremism, which ultimately encourage forms of dependency and individual or collective self-destruction.

History shows that religious extremism, national extremism and also intolerance have produced in the world, be it in the East or West, what might be referred to as signs of a “third world war being fought piecemeal”. In several parts of the world and in many tragic circumstances these signs have begun to be painfully apparent, as in those situations where the precise number of victims, widows and orphans is unknown. We see, in addition, other regions preparing to become theatres of new conflicts, with outbreaks of tension and a build-up of arms and ammunition, and all this in a global context overshadowed by uncertainty, disillusionment, fear of the future, and controlled by narrow-minded economic interests.

We likewise affirm that major political crises, situations of injustice and lack of equitable distribution of natural resources – which only a rich minority benefit from, to the detriment of the majority of the peoples of the earth – have generated, and continue to generate, vast numbers of poor, infirm and deceased persons. This leads to catastrophic crises that various countries have fallen victim to despite their natural resources and the resourcefulness of young people which characterize these nations. In the face of such crises that result in the deaths of millions of children – wasted away from poverty and hunger – there is an unacceptable silence on the international level.

It is clear in this context how the family as the fundamental nucleus of society and humanity is essential in bringing children into the world, raising them, educating them, and providing them with solid moral formation and domestic security. To attack the institution of the family, to regard it with contempt or to doubt its important role, is one of the most threatening evils of our era.

We affirm also the importance of awakening religious awareness and the need to revive this awareness in the hearts of new generations through sound education and an adherence to moral values and upright religious teachings. In this way we can confront tendencies that are individualistic, selfish, conflicting, and also address radicalism and blind extremism in all its forms and expressions.

The first and most important aim of religions is to believe in God, to honour Him and to invite all men and women to believe that this universe depends on a God who governs it. He is the Creator who has formed us with His divine wisdom and has granted us the gift of life to protect it. It is a gift that no one has the right to take away, threaten or manipulate to suit oneself. Indeed, everyone must safeguard this gift of life from its beginning up to its natural end. We therefore condemn all those practices that are a threat to life such as genocide, acts of terrorism, forced displacement, trafficking in human organs, abortion and euthanasia. We likewise condemn the policies that promote these practices.

Moreover, we resolutely declare that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood. These tragic realities are the consequence of a deviation from religious teachings. They result from a political

manipulation of religions and from interpretations made by religious groups who, in the course of history, have taken advantage of the power of religious sentiment in the hearts of men and women in order to make them act in a way that has nothing to do with the truth of religion. This is done for the purpose of achieving objectives that are political, economic, worldly and short-sighted. We thus call upon all concerned to stop using religions to incite hatred, violence, extremism and blind fanaticism, and to refrain from using the name of God to justify acts of murder, exile, terrorism and oppression. We ask this on the basis of our common belief in God who did not create men and women to be killed or to fight one another, nor to be tortured or humiliated in their lives and circumstances. God, the Almighty, has no need to be defended by anyone and does not want His name to be used to terrorize people.

This Document, in accordance with previous International Documents that have emphasized the importance of the role of religions in the construction of world peace, upholds the following:

- The firm conviction that authentic teachings of religions invite us to remain rooted in the values of peace; to defend the values of mutual understanding, *human fraternity* and harmonious coexistence; to re-establish wisdom, justice and love; and to reawaken religious awareness among young people so that future generations may be protected from the realm of materialistic thinking and from dangerous policies of unbridled greed and indifference that are based on the law of force and not on the force of law;
- Freedom is a right of every person: each individual enjoys the freedom of belief, thought, expression and action. The pluralism and the diversity of religions, colour, sex, race and language are willed by God in His wisdom, through which He created human beings. This divine wisdom is the source from which the right to freedom of belief and the freedom to be different derives. Therefore, the fact that people are forced to adhere to a certain religion or culture must be rejected, as too the imposition of a cultural way of life that others do not accept;
- Justice based on mercy is the path to follow in order to achieve a dignified life to which every human being has a right;
- Dialogue, understanding and the widespread promotion of a culture of tolerance, acceptance of others and of living together peacefully would contribute significantly to reducing many economic, social, political and environmental problems that weigh so heavily on a large part of humanity;
- Dialogue among believers means coming together in the vast space of spiritual, human and shared social values and, from here, transmitting the highest moral virtues that religions aim for. It also means avoiding unproductive discussions;
- The protection of places of worship – synagogues, churches and mosques – is a duty guaranteed by religions, human values, laws and international agreements. Every attempt to attack places of worship or threaten them by violent assaults, bombings or destruction, is a deviation from the teachings of religions as well as a clear violation of international law;
- Terrorism is deplorable and threatens the security of people, be they in the East or the West, the North or the South, and disseminates panic, terror and pessimism, but this is not due to

religion, even when terrorists instrumentalize it. It is due, rather, to an accumulation of incorrect interpretations of religious texts and to policies linked to hunger, poverty, injustice, oppression and pride. This is why it is so necessary to stop supporting terrorist movements fuelled by financing, the provision of weapons and strategy, and by attempts to justify these movements even using the media. All these must be regarded as international crimes that threaten security and world peace. Such terrorism must be condemned in all its forms and expressions;

- The concept of *citizenship* is based on the equality of rights and duties, under which all enjoy justice. It is therefore crucial to establish in our societies the concept of *full citizenship* and reject the discriminatory use of the term *minorities* which engenders feelings of isolation and inferiority. Its misuse paves the way for hostility and discord; it undoes any successes and takes away the religious and civil rights of some citizens who are thus discriminated against;

- Good relations between East and West are indisputably necessary for both. They must not be neglected, so that each can be enriched by the other's culture through fruitful exchange and dialogue. The West can discover in the East remedies for those spiritual and religious maladies that are caused by a prevailing materialism. And the East can find in the West many elements that can help free it from weakness, division, conflict and scientific, technical and cultural decline. It is important to pay attention to religious, cultural and historical differences that are a vital component in shaping the character, culture and civilization of the East. It is likewise important to reinforce the bond of fundamental human rights in order to help ensure a dignified life for all the men and women of East and West, avoiding the politics of double standards;

- It is an essential requirement to recognize the right of women to education and employment, and to recognize their freedom to exercise their own political rights. Moreover, efforts must be made to free women from historical and social conditioning that runs contrary to the principles of their faith and dignity. It is also necessary to protect women from sexual exploitation and from being treated as merchandise or objects of pleasure or financial gain. Accordingly, an end must be brought to all those inhuman and vulgar practices that denigrate the dignity of women. Efforts must be made to modify those laws that prevent women from fully enjoying their rights;

- The protection of the fundamental rights of children to grow up in a family environment, to receive nutrition, education and support, are duties of the family and society. Such duties must be guaranteed and protected so that they are not overlooked or denied to any child in any part of the world. All those practices that violate the dignity and rights of children must be denounced. It is equally important to be vigilant against the dangers that they are exposed to, particularly in the digital world, and to consider as a crime the trafficking of their innocence and all violations of their youth;

- The protection of the rights of the elderly, the weak, the disabled, and the oppressed is a religious and social obligation that must be guaranteed and defended through strict legislation and the implementation of the relevant international agreements.

To this end, by mutual cooperation, the Catholic Church and Al-Azhar announce and pledge to convey this Document to authorities, influential leaders, persons of religion all over the world,

appropriate regional and international organizations, organizations within civil society, religious institutions and leading thinkers. They further pledge to make known the principles contained in this Declaration at all regional and international levels, while requesting that these principles be translated into policies, decisions, legislative texts, courses of study and materials to be circulated.

Al-Azhar and the Catholic Church ask that this Document become the object of research and reflection in all schools, universities and institutes of formation, thus helping to educate new generations to bring goodness and peace to others, and to be defenders everywhere of the rights of the oppressed and of the least of our brothers and sisters.

In conclusion, our aspiration is that:

this Declaration may constitute an invitation to reconciliation and fraternity among all believers, indeed among believers and non-believers, and among all people of good will;

this Declaration may be an appeal to every upright conscience that rejects deplorable violence and blind extremism; an appeal to those who cherish the values of tolerance and fraternity that are promoted and encouraged by religions;

this Declaration may be a witness to the greatness of faith in God that unites divided hearts and elevates the human soul;

this Declaration may be a sign of the closeness between East and West, between North and South, and between all who believe that God has created us to understand one another, cooperate with one another and live as brothers and sisters who love one another.

This is what we hope and seek to achieve with the aim of finding a universal peace that all can enjoy in this life.

Abu Dhabi, 4 february 2019