



## Abrahamic Faiths Initiative Statement – Rome, Italy – January 16, 2020

As members of the family of Abraham, we stand in solidarity -- Jews, Christians, and Muslims -- to honor the father of our shared faith in recognition of our common heritage; to pray that God helps us to serve and treat each other with love, mutual respect, and kindness; and to promote the common good. Central to our shared heritage is the ethic of reciprocity, of doing unto others as we would have them do unto us. This golden rule, common to almost all ethical traditions including beyond the Abrahamic faiths, precludes us from committing violence against others.

We believe that every soul is sacred. No one should ever invoke the name of God, or the teachings of Abraham, to incite bloodshed or to oppress others. We are committed to the principles stated in the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, reminding us that “the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.” Article 18 of the Declaration also states, “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.”

We endorse our **commitment to "resolutely declare that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility, and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood,"** as stated in the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together in 2019.

We are inspired by other recent efforts to inculcate teachings of religion that advocate comity, peace, and multi-faith respect and cooperation. In Islam, the Charter of Medina was the basis of a multi-religious polity in the seventh-century. Its spirit more recently animated the Marrakesh Declaration on the Rights of Minorities in Muslim-Majority Countries of 2016, and its affirmation of the principle of constitutional citizenship, which ensures that members of all faiths, as well as those without, enjoy justice and equality under the law, including their religious freedom.

We express our commitment to the ideas of the Charter for the New Alliance of Virtue, signed by faith leaders in 2019, and its predecessor “Washington Declaration,” whereby Abrahamic and other faith leaders convened to assert their commitment to peace, religious liberty, justice, compassion, and mutual respect.

So, we have gathered here to assert that the textual basis, the moral logic, our varied understandings of God’s call and/or command to us to be pursuers of justice and peace; a moral goad to the conscience of our own nations, our local communities and our religious communities -- all this is clear. We are inspired where we have witnessed

religious entities organizing to pursue the implementation of these values in the political, economic, cultural and civic experience of God's children everywhere.

Yet we stand with full recognition that at a global level too little has been gained; too few of these eloquent statements and long-held beliefs have been implemented to transform societies.

We commit to challenge ourselves and our faith communities, to seek to serve those of other faiths and of no faith. **Now is the time for those who embrace these Abrahamic ideals to act with wise and effective strategies and tactics to implement these values across the globe.** To do so, we commit to working together or individually, whichever is more effective in a given community or nation. We call to those of good conscience in every religion and no religion to join us in acting.

We are conscious of the brutalization of discourse facilitated in no small part by the gifts of modern technology. This contributes to increasing attacks on our respective religious communities, places of worship and institutions.

It is incumbent on us to demonstrate mutual solidarity and to ensure that such attacks are clearly condemned by all of us together. We must explore mechanisms by which we may be of practical support for one another and to witness thereby to that solidarity.

In this spirit, then, we stand together today to pledge:

- To strengthen our commitment to the universal virtues embedded in our faith traditions that call us to treat each other as we would have others treat us.
- To promote these virtues in all communities, regions, and nations of the world,
- To focus such efforts towards those wracked by conflicts and carnage, where possible, by sending teams to one or two areas not yet served by multi-faith efforts to help spur and guide towards peace.
- To advocate before our political and civic leaders to use these values of religious freedom, civic equality, and societal change of differences as a foundation of laws, policies, and civic norms.
- To engage upon our return home with our own faith community to ask them to increase the scope and effectiveness of our efforts towards these ends.
- To address and delegitimize those within our own faith communities who use violence and bloodshed in the name of religion and impose their religious values on others.
- To pray to God and seek Divine guidance in our efforts to promote justice, peace, and respectful coexistence.