



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE COLLOQUIUM
ON «HOLINESS IN CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM»**

Thursday, 9 May 1985

Dear Friends,

It is a special joy for me to be able to welcome you, our guests who follow the faith of Islam, to Rome for the colloquium on "Holiness in Christianity and Islam". My fraternal greetings go as well to those Christians who have been taking part in the colloquium. As I have often said in other meetings with Muslims, your God and ours is one and the same, and we are brothers and sisters in the faith of Abraham. Thus it is natural that we have much to discuss concerning true holiness in obedience and worship to God.

All true holiness comes from God, who is called "The Holy One" in the Sacred Books of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Your Holy Qur'an calls God "Al-Quddus", as in the verse: "He is God, besides Whom there is no other, the Sovereign, the Holy the (source of) Peace" (*Al-Qur'an* 59, 23). The prophet Hosea links God's holiness with his forgiving love for mankind, a love which surpasses our ability to comprehend: "I am God, not man; I am the Holy One in your midst and have no wish to destroy" (*Os.* 11, 9). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches his disciples that holiness consists in assuming, in our human way, the qualities of God's own holiness which he has revealed to mankind: "Be holy, even as your heavenly Father is holy" (*Matth.* 5, 48).

Thus, the Qur'an calls you to uprightness (*al-salah*), to conscientious devotion (*al-taqwa*), to goodness (*al-husn*), and to virtue (*al-birr*), which is described as believing in God, giving one's wealth to the needy, freeing captives, being constant in prayer, keeping one's word, and being patient in times of suffering, hardship and violence (*Qur'an* 2, 177). Similarly, Saint Paul stresses the love we must show towards all, and the duty to lead a blameless life in the sight of God: "May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race as much as we love you. And may he so confirm your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all his

saints” (*1 Thess.* 3, 12-13). In today’s world, it is more important than ever that men and women of faith, assisted by God’s grace, should strive for true holiness. Self-centred tendencies, such as greed, the lust for power and prestige, competition, revenge, the lack of forgiveness, and the quest for earthly pleasures - all these threaten to turn mankind from the path to goodness and holiness which God has intended for all of us. The countless numbers of good people around the world - Christians, Muslims, and others - who quietly lead lives of authentic obedience, praise, and thanksgiving to God and selfless service of their neighbour, offer humanity a genuine alternative, “God’s way”, to a world which otherwise would be destroyed in selfseeking, hatred, and struggle.

May the God of holiness bless your efforts throughout these days!

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