

**MESSAGE OF HIS BEATITUDE
THE ARCHBISHOP OF CYPRUS
CHRYSOSTOMOS II
FOR THE WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK**

At a time when the whole humanity is called to find answers and solutions to the many considerable and major problems that face the world, religion can play a key role and reveal the way, of love and respect, for the right of each person, to believe, to dream, to hope for something that is unique to each one of us.

Unfortunately, we often witness, terrible acts of violence and religious intolerance and discrimination around the world. Under these circumstances, we can't move forward to the future and we can't reserve the right for the next generations, to live in a better, and more secure and peaceful world. Thus, we have to reaffirm our common values of love, mutual respect and understanding and we have to foster interfaith dialogue within the spirit of the Holy Scripture: *"Let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves, is born of God and knows God. He, who doesn't love, doesn't know God, for God is love"* (1 John: 4, 7).

The Church of Cyprus, remains true to the beliefs and ideas of love, peace and of mutual understanding. It is our commitment to promote dialogue between different religions globally, regionally and locally, not only in theory but also in practice. For the Church of Cyprus dialogue with Turkish

Cypriots, in our own country is of existential importance, because of the fact that the northern part of our island is enslaved and under Turkish military occupation since 1974. Since then, basic Human Rights are violated daily and religious freedom is not respected. We have no right to worship in or protect and preserve our centuries old churches and monasteries. The Church of Cyprus knows that only through sincere and open dialogue with Turkish Cypriot Muslims, we will be able to overcome our differences and build trust with one another. Besides Cyprus problem has never been a religious problem, as Muslims Turkish Cypriots and Christians Greek Cypriots, used to live together in peace and harmony. In this respect, we have been promoting and personally involved in dialogue with the Turkish Cypriot religious leadership and we will continue to do so, for the sake of understanding, justice and peace.

With these thoughts, we would like to congratulate His Majesty King Abdullah II King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for this excellent initiative of the **World Interfaith Harmony Week** announced at the United Nations General Assembly. We would also like to acknowledge His Highness Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad for his continuous efforts, his strong commitment to establish the annual World Interfaith Harmony Week. Moreover, we would like to express our appreciation to the Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Center for organizing this special ceremony.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude for all those religious leaders, governments and for all those people, men and women of all ages, recognized or anonymous, who

work hard in practice, to ensure a better world for all people, regardless of faith and religious beliefs by following the instructions of the Bible: *“My children, let’s not love in words only, neither with the tongue only, but in deed and truth”* (1 John: 3, 18).

†CHRYSOSTOMOS II ARCHBISHOP OF CYPRUS

Holy Archbishopric of Cyprus,
2 February 2011.