

World Interfaith Harmony Week
February 1-7, 2021
Event Report
Rumi Forum, Washington DC

Event Title

“In the Name of Human Fraternity”
Dialogue as the path, cooperation as the code, understanding as the method

Concept Note

The Legacy

It is hard to exaggerate the legacy of the meeting between St. Francis of Assisi and Sultan Malik Al-Kamil in 1219, a historical encounter that took place in the midst of the Fifth Crusade. This event is still remembered as a landmark of religion’s transformative power despite differences even during the most unwelcoming moments. In 3-5 February 2019, His Holiness Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb signed “A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together” in the United Arab Emirates to mark the 800th anniversary of the iconic meeting.

The Document

The Human Fraternity Document, rather than being a symbolic commemorative text, draws inspiration from the past for concrete future action. It is realistic in admitting the challenges humanity faces today, straightforward in highlighting the vital role of religion while addressing them, inclusive in recognizing the role that various stakeholders can play in solution, and interdisciplinary in inviting many forms of human expertise to the universal endeavor. In an act of due recognition of this initiative by the global community, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on December 15 2020 (A/75/L.52) that proclaims February 4 as the “International Day of Human Fraternity”, to be observed each year beginning in 2021.

The Event

The eminent signatories of the Human Fraternity “ask that this Document become the object of research and reflection in all schools, universities and institutes of formation”. Rumi Forum welcomes this call by hosting the panel “In the Name of Human Fraternity” on the first International Day of Human Fraternity. Join us for a spectrum of reflections by a panel of prominent Catholic and Muslim speakers and an interactive session that will follow. **The panel aims to observe the first International Day of Human Fraternity by highlighting the operational vision of the Human Fraternity Document rather than being a ceremonial text of goodwill.**

Event Logistics

Venue: Zoom
Date: Thursday, February 4th, 2021
Time: 7:00 - 8:30 pm
Format: Panel
Contact: Ibrahim Anli, i.anli@rumiforum.org

Speakers

Dr. Pim Valkenberg, Catholic University of America

The Document on Human Fraternity and Pope Francis: Initiatives toward Encounters of Friendship

Dr. Zeki Saritoprak, John Carroll University

On the Necessity of Human Fraternity: Theological and Practical Reflections

Genevieve Mougey, Director of the Office for Social Concerns, Archdiocese of Washington

The Work of Social Friendship, Dialogue, & Pastoral Application: A Catholic Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue

Summary

In the first half of the panel, each speaker made a 15-minute presentation. Dr. Pim Valkenberg presented the historical background with a particular focus on key documents of the Catholic Church, namely *Nostra Aetate* and *Fratelli Tutti*. Dr. Zeki Saritoprak's talk focused on theological foundations of the concept of human fraternity, specifically in a Qur'anic perspective. Genevieve Mougey highlighted practical dimensions of dialogue, including its ground rules, framework and challenges.

The second half of the event was interactive. Participants from a variety of backgrounds shared reflections, comments and addressed their questions to the panelists.