



Press release 4

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MEETING FOR THE FRIENDSHIP AMONGST PEOPLES

#meeting15

August 20th -26th Rimini Fiera

Inaugural press conference

Religions are part of the solution, not the problem

Rimini, August 20th 2015 - "The messages of Pope Francis and the President of the Republic Mattarella are the key of reading and the opening of this Meeting." Emilia Guarnieri, president of the Meeting Foundation for Friendship Amongst Peoples, opened using these words the inaugural press conference this morning. Three protagonists of the most important encounter of today were present. It was dedicated to dialogue among the believers of the three great monotheistic religions (15:00 Auditorium Intesa Sanpaolo): Azzedine Gaci, rector of the Othmane Mosque of Villeurbanne in France; Haïm Korsia, Grand Rabbi of France and Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, which, as Guarnieri underlined, formulated the title for the event of this afternoon: "religions are part of the solution, not the problem. "

The President of the Meeting stressed that Mattarella recognized the role played by the Meeting in these late years "to enrich the pluralism of our society" and to contribute to that dialogue and encounter among men that only can win terrorism and create a better world. "Because democracy can be exported - wrote the president, quoted by Guarnieri - through example and culture." About Pope's message, Guarnieri reminded the task assigned to all Christians, to rekindle the sense of this lack of which the heart is full. Azzedine Gaci said the Meeting is "an event dedicated to live together", which clarifies the conditions for true coexistence. In this perspective, the same title of the encounter requires a condition: "Religions are part of the solution only if they are taught in a certain way, otherwise they create problems."

Haïm Kosia proposed to overcome the idea of tolerance as a condition of coexistence, "tolerance - he said - is often seen as a simple acceptance of contradictory ideas, but it's necessary to take a step back and see otherness as an essential condition for the existence of human being. In this way, unity is not a mutual flattering but on the contrary an enrichment for me and for others. "

The clarification on tolerance was evoked also by Cardinal Tauran. He remarked that in the great family of all believers, united by one Father, "we do not tolerate, but love each other and we need to move from tolerance to love and friendship ». Tauran stated three challenges that believers has to face today. The first is identity, which requires a clear idea of their faith, because it's not possible to dialogue on ambiguity. The other is the challenge of otherness: "the one who believes and prays in a different from me is not an enemy but a friend who is on the same road to walk together." Third challenge is the sincerity of our intentions, because we dialogue to convert but to walk together on the path of truth.



The three guests then answered a question on the role of media for dialogue and peace. Kosia said journalists have to tell what's happening with sincerity and it is hoped that more and more space is given to initiatives in places of worship that occur every day in the world.

Gaci then envisaged three key points: avoid assimilating the unacceptable behaviors of individuals and groups to those of entire communities; promoting interfaith dialogue; support all those who carry spirituality. Tauran, finally, invited to give room to all the positive events that happen but which are ignored, "because that's the only way for us to give hope."

(V.Car., D.B.)