



Walking together in Hope

01.11.2025 | Pope Leo XIV

On October 28, the Holy Father Leo XIV received in audience the participants in the meeting on “Nostra Aetate” on the occasion of its sixtieth anniversary, entitled “Walking together in Hope”. The following is the Pope’s address to those present at the meeting:

**Respected Heads and Representatives of World Religions,
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

Peace be with you!

It is with joy and deep gratitude that I extend my cordial greetings and express my sincere thanks for your presence at this commemoration of the ground-breaking document [Nostra Aetate](#).

The theme of this evening’s gathering is “Walking Together in Hope.” Sixty years ago, a seed of hope for interreligious dialogue was planted. Today, your presence bears witness that this seed has grown into a mighty tree, its branches reaching far and wide, offering shelter and bearing the rich fruits of understanding, friendship, cooperation and peace.

For sixty years, men and women have labored to bring [Nostra Aetate](#) to life. They watered the seed, tended the soil and protected it. Some even gave their lives — martyrs for dialogue, who stood against violence and hatred. Today, let us remember them with gratitude. As Christians, together with our brothers and sisters of other religions, we are who we are because of their courage, their sweat and their sacrifice. In this regard, I sincerely thank you for your collaboration with the [Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue](#), the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews at the [Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity](#), and with the Catholic Church in your home countries. Thank you for accepting our invitation, and for gracing this occasion with your presence.

My dear brothers and sisters, your friendship and esteem for the Catholic Church shone forth in a special way at the time of [Pope Francis](#)’s final illness and death — through the heartfelt messages of condolence you sent, the prayers offered in your countries, and the presence of those who were able to attend his funeral. That same friendship shone again through your congratulatory messages upon [my election as Pope](#) and the presence of some of you at the [Inaugural Mass](#). All these gestures testify to the deep and lasting bond we share; a bond I cherish profoundly.

If the [Nostra Aetate](#) Declaration has nourished the ties between us, I am convinced that its message remains highly relevant today. Let us, then, take a moment to reflect on some of its most significant teachings.

First, [Nostra Aetate](#) reminds us that humanity is drawing closer together, and that it is the task of the Church to promote unity and love among men and women, and among nations (cf. n.1).

Second, it points to what we all share in common. We belong to one human family — one in origin and one also in our final goal. Moreover, every person seeks answers to the great riddles of the human condition (cf. n.1).

Third, religions everywhere try to respond to the restlessness of the human heart. Each, in its own way, offers teachings, ways of life and sacred rites that help guide their followers toward peace and meaning (cf. n.2).

Fourth, the Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions, which “reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all people” (n. 2). She regards them with sincere reverence and invites her sons and daughters, through dialogue and collaboration, to recognize, preserve and promote what is spiritually, morally and culturally good in all peoples.

Finally, we must not forget how [Nostra Aetate](#) actually developed. Initially, [Pope John XXIII](#) commissioned Cardinal Augustin Bea to present a treatise to the Council describing a new relationship between the Catholic Church and Judaism. We can say, therefore, that the fourth chapter, dedicated to Judaism, is the heart and generative core of the entire Declaration. For the first time in the history of the Church, we have a doctrinal text with an explicitly theological basis that illustrates the Jewish roots of Christianity in a well-founded biblical manner. At the same time, [Nostra Aetate](#) (n. 4) takes a firm stand against all forms of antisemitism. Thus, in its following chapter, [Nostra Aetate](#) teaches that we cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly or sisterly way any man or woman created in the image of God. Indeed, the Church rejects all forms of discrimination or harassment because of race, color, condition of life or religion (cf. n 5).

This historic document, therefore, opened our eyes to a simple yet profound principle: dialogue is not a tactic or a tool, but a way of life — a journey of the heart that transforms everyone involved, the one who listens and the one who speaks. What is more, we walk this journey not by abandoning our own faith, but by standing firmly within it. For authentic dialogue begins not in compromise, but in conviction — in the deep roots of our own belief that give us the strength to reach out to others in love.

Sixty years later, the message of [Nostra Aetate](#) remains as urgent as ever. During his Apostolic Journey to Singapore, at an interfaith meeting, [Pope Francis](#) encouraged young people in the following words: “God is for everyone, and therefore, we are all God’s children” ([Interreligious Meeting with Young People](#), 13 September 2024). This calls us to look beyond what separates us and to discover what unites us all. Yet today, we find ourselves in a world where that vision is often obscured. We see walls rising again — between nations, between religions, even between neighbors. The noise of conflict, the wounds of poverty and the cry of the earth remind us how fragile our human family remains. Many have grown weary of promises; many have forgotten how to hope.

As religious leaders, guided by the wisdom of our respective traditions, we share a sacred responsibility: to help our people to break free from the chains of prejudice, anger and hatred; to help them rise above egoism and self-centeredness; to help them overcome the greed that destroys both the human spirit and the earth. In this way, we can lead our people to become prophets of our time — voices that denounce violence and injustice, heal division, and proclaim peace for all our brothers and sisters.

This year, the Catholic Church celebrates the [Jubilee Year of Hope](#). Both hope and pilgrimage are realities common to all our religious traditions. This is the journey that [Nostra Aetate](#) invites us to continue — to walk together in hope. Then, when we do so, something beautiful happens: hearts open, bridges are built and new paths appear where none seemed possible. This is not the work of one religion, one nation, or even one generation. It is a sacred task for all humanity — to keep hope alive, to keep dialogue alive and to keep love alive in the heart of the world. My dear brothers and sisters, at this crucial moment in history, we are entrusted with a great mission — to reawaken in all men and women their sense of humanity and of the sacred. This, my friends, is precisely why we have come together in this place — bearing the great responsibility, as religious leaders, to bring

hope to a humanity that is often tempted by despair. Let us remember that prayer has the power to transform our hearts, our words, our actions and our world. It renews us from within, rekindling in us the spirit of hope and love.

Here, I recall the words of Saint John Paul II, spoken in Assisi in 1986: "If the world is going to continue, and men and women are to survive in it, the world cannot do without prayer" ([*To the Representatives of the Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities and of the World Religions*](#), 27 October 1986).

And so now, I invite each one of you to pause for a moment in silent prayer. May peace come down upon us and fill our hearts.

Source: [Vatican](#).