Religions and the Building of Peace:
The Encounter and Declaration of Montserrat
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Religions and the Building of Peace: The Encounter and Declaration of Montserrat

By Manuel Manonelles

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The logo of the Encounter and Declaration of Monsterrat is inspired by a 17th Century relief located at the Benedictine Monastery of Emaus-Montserrat in Prague. Picture by Manuel Manonelles
CONTENTS

I. The Encounter of Montserrat on Religions and the Building of Peace

I.a) The Encounter ................................................................. 7
I.b) The participants ............................................................. 9
I.c) The addresses ................................................................. 17
I.d) Outstanding speeches:
    • Seyed Mohammad Khatami .............................................. 24
    • Prince El Hassan bin Talal .................................................. 28

II. The Declaration of Montserrat on Religions and the Building of Peace

II.a) The Declaration ............................................................. 35
II.b) The signatories to the Declaration ..................................... 39
II.c) Endorsements of the Declaration:
    • In situ endorsements ...................................................... 41
    • Later endorsements ....................................................... 43

III. Media impact ................................................................ 46

IV. Annexes

IV.a) Websites .................................................................. 55
IV.b) Reference documents on interreligious dialogue:
    Barcelona Declaration (1994) ........................................... 57
    Lille Declaration (2009) ...................................................... 61
IV.c) Selected photographs from the meeting ....................... 67
I. The Encounter of Montserrat on Religions and the Building of Peace
I.a) The Encounter

The Encounter of Montserrat on Religions and the Building of Peace took place at Montserrat Abbey on 10 April 2008. The encounter was organised by the Foundation for a Culture of Peace with the support of the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation (ACCD), in cooperation with Montserrat Abbey, the Foundation for Dialogue among Civilisations (FDC, with headquarters in Geneva), ISESCO (the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, with headquarters in Rabat) and the Montserrat Mountain Trust.

The purpose of the meeting, which brought together leading figures from both different religious confessions and civil society, was to discuss the role that religions can play in promoting a culture of peace, particularly through interreligious and intercultural dialogue. As a result of these discussions, the meeting approved the Declaration of Montserrat on Religions and the Building of Peace.

The signatories to the Declaration of Montserrat include: Federico Mayor, President of the Foundation for a Culture of Peace and former Director General of UNESCO; Mohammad Khatami, President of the FDC and former President of the Republic of Iran; His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia and leader of the Middle East Council of Churches; Joan Enric Vives, Bishop of La Seu d’Urgell and co-Prince of Andorra, represented by Joan Massa, Secretary of the Bishopric; Abdulaziz O. Altwajiri, Director General of ISESCO; Rabbi René-Samuel Sirat, Vice-President of the Conference of European Rabbis; Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop of Europe of the Assyrian Church of the East; Kjell M. Bondevik, President of the Oslo Centre for Peace and Human Rights and former Prime Minister of Norway; Candido Mendes de Almeida, Secretary General of the Academy of Latinity; William F. Vendley, Secretary General of the World Conference of Religions for Peace; and Josep Maria Soler, Abbot of Montserrat, as host.

Although unable to attend the presentation in person, the following sent messages endorsing the Declaration of Montserrat: Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan; Mário Soares, former President of Portugal and President of the Mário Soares Foundation; and Rabbi Arthur Schneier of New York.
Other leading figures who attended the Meeting of Montserrat included: Roberto Savio, Director of External Relations, World Political Forum; Paul Ortega, Secretary General of Pax Romana – ICMICA; Gary Vachicouras, Executive Director, Foundation for Interreligious and Intercultural Research and Dialogue, Geneva; and Manuel Manonelles, Secretary and Coordinator of the Meeting and Declaration.

On the eve of the meeting, the Government of Catalonia gave a dinner at the Palau de Pedralbes to welcome visiting authorities. Standing in for the President, who was on an official visit, the Minister of Culture, Joan Manuel Tresserras, greeted the participants.

On April 11, the day after the meeting, moreover, a group of participants visited the Catalan Parliament, where they were welcomed by members of the presiding board. Firstly, a meeting took place behind closed doors, at which the board members received a copy of the Declaration of Montserrat, undertaking to distribute the document to all Members of Parliament. This was followed by a brief visit to the plenary chamber, where the participants coincided with a school group, on which a friendly exchange took place between pupils and dignitaries.
I.b) The participants

Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri is the Director General of The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization since 1991. Born in Riyadh in 1950. Holding a B.A. in the English Language and History, a M.A. in Applied Linguistics and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, he became Assistant Professor of the College of Education of the King Saud University in 1982. In 1985 he was appointed Deputy Director General of Culture, ISESCO; being unanimously selected Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – ISESCO – by the Fourth General Conference in 1991. Since then it has been re-elected in 1994, 1997 and in 2003. He is also Secretary General of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World, as well as member of several boards of Islamic Universities, Academies, and Executive Director of “Islam Today”, an Islamic academic journal, and “AL JAMIA” Journal.

His Holiness Aram I has been Catholicos of Cilicia of the Armenian Apostolic Church since 1995. He resides in Antelias, Beirut. Born Pedros Keshishian in Beirut, Lebanon in 1947. He was ordained priest in 1968, and was consecrated bishop in Antelias on 22 August 1980. From 1980 to 1995 he was bishop of Beirut of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Since 1995 the efforts of H.H. have reorganized and revitalized the work of the Church, particularly in the areas of theological formation, Christian education, publications, communications, cultural activities, youth, justice and peace, and human rights. With a strong ecumenical and inter-religious commitment, in 1991 he became moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and also serves on the Middle East Council of Churches.
His Holiness is an honorary President of the World Religions Museum Foundation, and World Religions for Peace international organization. Since November 2007, H.H. is president of the Middle East Council of Churches.

Candido Mendes de Almeida
Secretary General of the Academy of the Latinity

A renown Brazilian intellectual and academician, Prof. Mendes is a social scientist, rector of the Candido Mendes University in Río de Janeiro, he is also president of Sociedade Brasileira de Instrução, a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters and president of the Forum of Rectors of Río de Janeiro.

Dr. Mendes has held senior posts in academic and international governmental contexts, including at: the Brazilian Academy of Economics; UNESCO; The Presidential Commission on Corruption; and the Council on Educational Cooperation with Latin America; he also has been president of the International Social Sciences Association.

Among others he has received a Honoris Causa degree by the University of La Sorbonne. He has also been member of the UN High Level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations.

Joan Enric Vives
Bishop of La Seu d’Urgell and Co-prince of Andorra

Joan Enric Vives is bishop of La Seu d’Urgell and Co-prince of Andorra, this is co-Head of State of the Principality of Andorra, since 2003. Prior to this he was auxiliary bishop of Barcelona (and titular bishop of Nona) -were he held different posts of responsibility within one of the largest archdioceses of Europe at that time- from 1993 to 2001 when he was appointed deputybishop of La Seu.

He is the Secretary and Spokesperson of the Episcopal Conference Tarracconense. He has studies of Theology and Philosophy as well as in Humanities, teaching some of this subjects and having been the vice-dean of the College of Philosophy of the University Ramon Llull (1983-1993).
The Encounter of Montserrat on Religions and the Building of Peace

Kjell Magne Bondevik
President of the Oslo Centre for Human Rights

Prime Minister of Norway 1997-2000 and 2001-2005. Minister of Foreign Affairs. Minister of Education and Church Affairs. Member of Parliament 1973-2005. Bondevik announced his retirement from national-level politics at the end of his term as prime minister and did not seek re-election for his seat in parliament. Bondevik was born in Molde, Norway. He became a theological candidate from MF Norwegian School of Theology in 1975. In 1979 he was ordained as pastor in the (Lutheran) Norwegian State Church. He is married to Bjørg Bondevik (born Rasmussen), and has the three children. He is member of the Club of Madrid and Honorary Member of The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation.

Mar Odisho Oraham
Bishop of Europe of the Assyrian Church of the East

Mar Odisho Oraham is the Bishop of Europe of the Assyrian Church of the East, with residence in Sweden, and member of the Holy Synod of the Church. Bishop Oraham was representing H. B. Mar Gewargis Sliwa, Metropolitan of Iraq and Russia, who was appointed representative for this meeting by H.H. Mar Dinka IV, Catholicos and Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, who finally was unable to participate due to complications with the issue of his visa; and the need to return to his residence in Baghdad where he coordinates the work of his church in such turbulent times. Mar Gewargis Sliwa, as metropolitan, has been involved in several actions and processes of interreligious dialogue, especially with the Caldean Catholic Church.
Religions and the Building of Peace: The Encounter and Declaration of Montserrat.

Chief Rabbi René-Samuel Sirat  
Vice President of the Conference of European Rabbis

Born in Algeria, Chief Rabbi René-Samuel Sirat holds a PhD in Hebrew Language and Literature. He has taught at the Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations at the University of Paris and served as Chief Rabbi of France from 1981-87. He is currently Chief Rabbi of the Central Consistory and Vice Chairperson of the Conference of European Rabbis.

René-Samuel Sirat has invested much in inter-religious dialogue. He is the founding director of the UNESCO chair of “Reciprocal knowledge among the Religions of the Book”. This Chair organises inter-religious encounters and participates in organising sessions of the Faculty of the Religions of the Book in partnership with numerous universities. He is very active in Christian-Jewish Dialogue in France. After his election to Chief Rabbi of France, he also created a Muslim-Jewish dialogue group with the rector of the Muslim Institute in the Paris Mosque. Rabbi Sirat belongs to many international institutions and foundations involved in inter-religious dialogue.

Seyed Mohammad Khatami  
President of the Foundation for Dialogue among Cultures

Born in September 29, 1943, in Ardakan, Yazd Province is an Iranian scholar and politician. He served as the fifth President of Iran from August 2, 1997 to August 2, 2005. He also acted as Iran’s Minister of Culture in 1980s and 1990s.

As scholar, Khatami’s main research field is Political philosophy. He became a University lecturer at Tarbiat Modarres University where he taught Political philosophy specializing in German and Western philosophical trends in modern and post-modern eras. Following earlier works by renowned philosopher Dariush Shayegan, President Khatami introduced the theory of Dialogue Among Civilizations as a response to Huntington’s theory of Clash of Civilizations. After introducing the concept of his theory in several international societies (most importantly the U.N.) the theory gained a lot of international support. Consequently the United Nations proclaimed the year 2001 as the United Nations’ Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations, as per Khatami’s suggestion.

He has been member of the United Nations High Level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations.
William F. Vendley  
Secretary General of the World Conference of Religions for Peace

Dr. Vendley has served as Secretary General *Religions for Peace* since 1994. He is a member of the World Council, which is composed of outstanding international religious leaders. He also serves as the organization’s chief executive officer, overseeing the international secretariat in North America, Europe, the Balkans, West and East Africa, and Asia.

Dr. Vendley is a theologian and has served as a professor and dean in graduate schools of theology. He lectures frequently in academic, United Nations and NGO fora. He has been awarded numerous prizes for religion and human rights, and serves on the boards of a number of organizations ranging from the fine arts to those committed to peace building. He holds a doctorate in systematic theology from Fordham University and a master’s degree in religious studies from the Maryknoll School of Theology.

Federico Mayor  
President of the Foundation for a Culture of Peace

Prof. Federico Mayor is the President of the Foundation for a Culture of Peace since 1999, when he founded this institution after leaving UNESCO, where he served as Director General from 1987 till 1999. Prior to this he was Deputy-Director General of UNESCO, Minister of Science and Education of Spain (1981-82), Member of the European Parliament, of the Spanish Parliament and Advisor to the Spanish Prime Minister.

As scientific and scholar, he has been professor of molecular biology, rector of the University of Granada, co-founder of the Severo Ochoa Centre of Molecular Biology at the Autonomous University of Madrid, and of the Spanish High Council for Scientific Research - CSIC (1974). Recently, and by the request of the European Union, he also chaired the European Research Council; and now is also chairing the Initiative for Science in Europe-ISE.
At UNESCO he was the promoter of the Culture of Peace concept and programme, which was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of United Nations in 1999. From 2005 to 2006, by the request of the Secretary General, he has co-chaired the United Nations High Level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations. He serves in several international foundations and bodies and is promoter and supporter of several civil society initiatives, the most outstanding the World Forum of Civil Society Network – Ubuntu Forum.

Host of the meeting

Josep Maria Soler
Abbot of Montserrat

Born in 1946 in Santa Eugènia de Ter, he went to elementary school and high school at the school of the Claretians priests in Sabadell, where he was a student of father and future bishop Pere Casaldàliga. Monk of Montserrat since 1970, he was ordained priest in 1981. He collaborated at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute of Jerusalem and in the Pontifical Athenaeum of Saint Anselm in Rome, where he obtained his degree in Sacramental Theology. Vice-president of the Spanish Society of Monastic Studies and deputy director of the magazine Studia Monastica, he was chosen as the abbot of Montserrat on May 16, 2000.
Representatives from other international organisations adhered to the meeting

Paul Ortega

In representation of Pax Romana – ICMICA. Secretary General of Pax Romana – International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs.

Roberto Savio

In representation of the World Political Form (WPF) and of the Alliance for a New Humanity (ANH). Vice-President of the Scientific Committee of the WPF and Member of the Board of Directors of the ANH.

Gary Vachicouras

In representation of the Foundation for Interreligious and Intercultural Research and Dialogue -Dr. Vachicouras is his Executive Director- and of the Royal Institute of Inter-Faith Studies of Jordan, which is Presided by H.R.H. Prince el Hassan bin Talal.

Personalities adhered to the meeting¹

H.R.H. Prince El Hassan bin Talal

H.R.H. Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, among other issues, has a long standing commitment with Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue. H.R.H. is the Moderator of the World Conference of Religions and Peace, President of the Royal Institute of Inter-

¹ But not able to participate due to their agenda
Faith Studies in Jordan and is involved in many international and local initiatives promoting human rights and intercultural understanding, among them the Club of Rome and the International Crisis Group.

**Mário Soares**

President of the Mário Soares Foundation. Former President, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal. Founder of the Portuguese Socialist Party he was forced to reside in exile until he could return to Portugal in 1974 in the context of the Carnation Revolution. He has also been Member of the European Parliament. A strong advocate in the defence of human rights, international law and the European movement, he has written numerous books and is currently supporting many institutional and civil society initiatives.

**Rabbi Arthur Schneier**

Senior Rabbi and President of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation. Rabbi Arthur Schneier fled in November of 1938 from Vienna to Budapest, where he survived the Holocaust. In 1947 he moved to the United States. Schneier became a Rabbi and was awarded an honorary doctorate in theology at Yeshiva University in New York City. He has been the spiritual leader of the Park East Synagogue since 1962. He was member of the United Nations High Level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations 2005-2006.
I.c) The addresses

JOSEP Mª SOLER  
*Abbot of Montserrat*

*Words of welcome:*

A monastery is a place where monks enjoy the peace that God bestows on them, a place where, every day, they build peace with their brothers in the community, where all are welcome and all are helped to find peace, a place from where the message of peace goes out. This fact alone would be sufficient for us to host this meeting, but we have a further reason to embrace this event with joy: this year we celebrate the thousandth anniversary of the birth of Abbot Bishop Oliva, founder of Montserrat. Bishop Oliva was a man of peace who worked for the rights of ordinary people and promoted justice and peace, particularly by instituting, in 1027, the “Peace and Truce of God”, the result of an assembly of nobles and clergy that was later ratified by the people and spread all around Europe. There is, then, a man of peace at the very roots of this house, and we, his successors, wish to continue to act as men of peace, sowers of peace amongst the men and women in this our world.

We are delighted to have you here and to welcome you to this house.

JOAN MASSA  
*Secretary of the Mithras of the Bishop of La Seu*

Most Reverend Father Abbot of Montserrat,  
Your honour, the President of the Foundation for a Culture of Peace,  
Honourable dignitaries,  
Monks, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address you as General Secretary to the Bishop Co-Prince of Andorra and as representative of the delegate of Monsignor Joan Enric Vives, Co-Prince and Bishop of La Seu d’Urgell. The Bishop was prevented from attending this meeting and signing the Declaration of Montserrat as planned at the very last minute in order to attend the funeral of a person close to him, and he expressly delegated me to take his place.

The Bishop and Co-Prince would like to assure of his desire to see the message of peace that we all support transmitted to our cultures and our societies. Indeed, through the Evangel, the community of the Catholic Church is whole-heartedly committed to this mission.
Peace will always be the fruit of justice. We must pray for peace to reach the hearts of one and all, taking root there. It is vital to consider what each individual and each religious faith can contribute to a culture of peace, to establishing commitments to work for peace. Always building bridges, never raising walls of confrontation. Happy are they who work for peace. Jesus promises us joy and a truly happy life if we never tire or flag in the cause of bringing peace to our communities, bestowing peace on all. A peace that includes respect and tolerance towards dissenters, responsibility towards the weak and oppressed and pardoning our enemy, closing wounds and promoting true reconciliation amongst cultures and religions.

This Encounter and Declaration of Montserrat on Religions and the Building of Peace gives us fresh impulse to work together for the eternal goal of achieving peace amongst people, nations and cultures. With respect and admiration for what each contributes, and with a will to join forces and show that religion never seeks confrontation, but urges believers to live in peace and in respect for human rights, to promote relations amongst peoples and cultures through true justice. That justice that, in the final outcome, leads to love.

CANDIDO MENDES DE ALMEIDA  
Secretary General of the Academy of Latinity

I would like to emphasise the importance of this meeting, the way in which we have committed ourselves in religious terms. I am talking not only of the largest Catholic country in the world, but of a country that has to face matters and decide what this religion really is compared to electronic evangelism, and the way we should understand the word that we have heard most frequently here: the word “values”. The word “values”, moreover, necessarily linked to the concept of human rights.

You will see that, in the Declaration, our concerns lead to a commitment to the idea of human beings in their condition, in their rights and in their abilities, above all to prevent the last and first great crime of the 21st century: othercide. The other is dying. It is the death of the other. What we are hearing here, today, is that this is the first, new crime that is committed through terrorism, the crime that is committed through the civilisation of fear, the crime that is committed in repudiation of the other, that is won with this great testimony of religion.

We have come up to Montserrat, we are all here, in the realisation that we are still only halfway along our journey, but following and representing that which, for us, means pursuing our vision of peace, which comes, above all, through the dignity of the other, and the recuperation in history and in hope of the other.
WILLIAM VENDLEY
Secretary General of World Conference of Religions for Peace

Mr. President,

You have gathered us here, in a time where we have to say, painfully, that all our religions—all of them—are being high jacked. This is a sad evidence of our moment in time, but this is true for every one of our religions—no one is excluded—they are being hijacked by extremist in their own tradition, at times by unscrupulous politicians and by the media. We are here together in recognition that is we, all of us together, who we are the solution to that. Religions can and, in fact, must cooperate. We need cooperation, if not, we will not solve our problems. For religious people it is deeper than that, it is moral. We have always known that we have to take care of each other and today we are here together united to put that moral imperative into action.

MAR ODISHO ORAHAM
Bishop of Europe of the Assyrian Church of the East

Your Excellencies,
Honourable authorities,
Brothers and sisters.

Peace, shalom, asalam, pace is the word that we all use. We are gathered here to talk about peace. All of us from different religious backgrounds, want to see peace. But peace cannot be attained unless we all ask religious and political leaders to really understand and value the word “peace”. Peace cannot and will never be achieved until we fully recognize the dignity of humankind. God created some of us brown, some white and some black. However, we all were made at the image and lightness of God.

One day someone asked to our lord Jesus Christ: “Which is the greatest command?” Jesus replied: “To love your God from all your heart, soul, thought and strength” and the second one which is similar to the first, “to love your neighbour as yourself”. Here we see two dimensions: a vertical one, which shows the relationship between the human beings and God; and the horizontal one, which shows the relationship of love and respect among all human beings.

Finally, love, respect and justice will prevail and shall lead us all to peace. We pray to the almighty God that his peace makes always well on Earth. We also pray that a channel of communication may be established between all religious leaders and civil authorities to bring peace and dignity to all humankind.
First of all it is a great pleasure to be here. We had an interesting discussion today about religions and conflicts, and I will start by saying that we must be careful not to give religion too heavy responsibility for conflicts in the world because conflicts are mostly about power, ideology and resources. But secondly, I will say that religion is often distorted and misused to stir up conflicts which provide wars. Therefore, religion can be a dimension in conflicts and wars as we have seen it in Northern Ireland, in the Middle East the Balkans, Sudan, and in other African countries.

But few if any are the religions that have these aggressive characteristics in their holy scriptures. It is man-made. But religion has always to be interpreted by someone. Consequently, we should work against such negative interpretations by enhancing our efforts to promote understanding between people belonging to different religions and countries. Today we are witnessing an increased polarisation between the Islamic world and the Western world. The lack of understanding enhances frequent humiliations inflicted upon Muslim communities by the West that have consequently resulted in deep resentment, and misgivings as to the way world politics functions. This is also stated in the High Level Report of the Alliance of Civilizations when they say: “Muslim communities share a sense of discrimination, humiliation or marginalisation against them, based on ethnic, religious or identity markers”. It is so much misunderstanding between the Western world and the Islamic world that there are so many stereotypes and we must work against it.

Let me just say that there have been many conflicts between Muslims and Christians throughout history, but it is also important to remember that there is a history of cooperation between the religions and believers of both religions. And so today we have seen it, for instance, in Sierra Leone and in South Africa in the struggle against apartheid and so on.

I have learnt a lesson of two important factors related to religious dialogue. One, we must try to identify and focus more in common values which we have in the main religions, and use this as a platform for mobilising for reconciliation. And at least we have human dignity as a common value, we have ideal peace as a common value, we have the idea of justice as a common value, we have respect for the sacred despite it is different for us what is sacred as a common value. Let us use these values. And secondly, it is important that we also learn to live with our differences, because there are obvious. It is not our goal to agree in everything but to respect and to understand, even to celebrate our differences. That is important.

Let me end up by saying that by doing this I truly believe that religion instead of being a source of conflict can be a source of reconciliation and that religion can be a part of the solution.
I should like to begin my address with a quotation from the Bible, taken from the Book of Job: “God maketh peace in His high places”. We rabbis ask ourselves why God needs to intervene to make peace in the celestial sphere if there is no war, jealousy, friction or violence amongst the planets and the stars. “Nevertheless”, say the rabbis, “if God has to make peace in the heavens, He must have good reason since, unfortunately, human beings do have a tendency towards violence, jealousy and the urge to hurt our neighbour”. That is why it is so important to return to the basic values that we are taught in order to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah when he says that: “There will be none to hurt in all the holy mountain”. If we act together in God’s service, as the prophet ordains, with our hearts united and working in harmony, then the prophecy will come true, and there will be no more violence on Earth. That is the goal we must all pursue: to eradicate violence and hate and teach tolerance, brotherhood, justice and peace. Let us pray for God’s help in this. Amen.

Ladies and gentlemen, peace be upon all of you.

It is an honour for me to be here in this historical monastery. Religion was sent to humanity as a guardian and as a mercy from the almighty God. Therefore, we can use it for this purpose if we understand its mission and its message to humanity.

There are many wrong minded and ill spirited people who misuse religion to differentiate between peoples and create animosity among them. This is what we have to face in all our capacities. The almighty God said in the Coran that “all peoples are equal in the sight of God and the best of them in his side is the most righteous and there is no difference between religions and the messengers of God”. We do not differentiate between the messengers of God and to Him all we return. And this message that Islam, Christianity and Judaism have convened to the followers has to be exposed to all the generations and the publics in all societies because many people are trying to deceive them and hide this truth from their side and perceptions. We will work together as believers in God and as believers in the dignity of human beings to save humanity from all these catastrophes, all this illness, all these problems and hatred that is dividing them and creating this clash that is minted to separate and put them against one another.
I will conclude by a verse from the Coran that I know it is also in Christianity, in the Bible and in the Torah, because they are all from God. It says: “Very little have ordained mankind with dignity and the dignity that mankind has is a gift from God”. If is not a gift from the human beings themselves, so we have to protect this dignity by avoiding anything that insult or humiliates the dignity of human beings in their religious feelings and also in their belongingness, whether they are adhered to one religion or not. We have to respect the human dignity because is a gift from God and religion has to play a great role in this respect.

S. S. ARAM I  
*Catholicos of Cilicia and President of the Middle East Council of Churches*

The message that comes to us today is neither from this podium nor from any power in this world. It comes from God from ultimate being. And it is the message of hope, it is a challenge. God has created us as human beings to live together. God has created us to be different. God has created us to live together in this world, which is God’s world and we are challenged by God to live together in this creation as the gift of God. We must live together in participating in the life of our societies as equal human beings. We are called to live together with no discrimination between different genders of human societies. We are bound to live together by respecting and accepting each other. Looking at these corners I see in a living way the gift of God, the diversity and enrichment of this creation and of the human society. And God’s message calls us to respond in obedience, in humility and with a sense of responsibility.

And I believe this is the challenge that we must take very seriously as religions and as human beings by engaging ourselves in all initiatives, in all actions that preserve this creation that enhance the dignity of human being and that restores peace with justice in this world.

FEDERICO MAYOR  
*President of the Foundation for a Culture of Peace*

Dear Abbot of Montserrat,

First and foremost, I should like to thank you on behalf of us all for your hospitality and inspiration. Inspiration, which has come not only from your words, but also from this place.

I am most grateful, also, to those that have come here from all over the world, representing institutions that play an important role in interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Finally, people have come together, representing different creeds but determined to work together towards that great goal which is peace.
Many thanks to you all. And many thanks, also, to the members of the media who are covering this event. To all those who wish to help to make this Declaration of Montserrat the starting-point for joint action, for the mobilisation of civil society so that, finally, we can achieve the goal we all desire to see fulfilled: that of redressing a situation that is bad because it is not based on the universal values and principles of respect towards all others. For years, matters have been governed, above all, by short-term interests.

Let me remind you briefly that, as early as 1994, the Barcelona Declaration on the Role of Religion in Promoting a Culture of Peace was signed at the Catalan Parliament in Barcelona. Amongst us here today is Félix Martí, one of those who, from the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia, helped to bring this initiative to fruition: a meeting to discuss how the religions can and should help to promote a culture of peace in response to the prevailing existence of violence and war.

And, later, in 1998, at the United Nations, at the proposal, precisely of President Khatami, as a consequence of and a reaction to Samuel Huntington’s provocation, a Declaration on Dialogue Among Civilisations, embracing all creeds and ideologies, was approved. And all this forms the basis behind the Declaration of Montserrat, which has strong roots in a series of initiatives and projects that require us all to work together in order to achieve their success.

Another important year was 2005, because it was then demonstrated at the great Millennium Goals + 5 Years Summit that very little had been done with the people in mind. In a situation where 3 billion dollars are spent worldwide every day on arms whilst people are dying of hunger, the heads of state and government said that it was necessary to promote a culture of peace, dialogue amongst cultures, civilisations and religions, and warmly welcomed the idea of the Alliance of Civilisations, which is the fruit of the meeting, of our dialogue.

What we now seek to achieve through the Declaration of Montserrat is, precisely, to bring together as many different civil society institutions as possible, embracing the widest spectrum of cultures and religions, in order to perform the role that we have set ourselves, working alongside a United Nations that should be strengthened, reorganised, perhaps even reformed. We want to play the role of the peoples. We want civil society really to meet its responsibilities. And we want religions and religious values to play a positive role rather than widening divisions.

For so many centuries, we have been subjects, prevented from participating, the reigns of the future out of our own hands. Therefore, since no challenge is beyond the capacities of human beings, of each individual, we can create, invent and innovate to find solutions. It is in this faith in human capacity that we hope that our message from Montserrat will be broadcast and put into practice as widely as possible.
I.d) Outstanding speeches

Seyed Mohammad Khatami

The war-stricken atmosphere of today’s world, which is also infested with violence, has made us face a big question: Is the human history proceeding toward peace and security or war and violence are a permanent rule in history? Another question addresses the relationship between religion and violence. Can religion introduce itself as an entity that can make life and relations among humans tender and prompt peace?

I believe that despite the violence, bloodshed and conflicts that exist in the form of terror and war, history is delicately advancing in a direction that will culminate the establishment of peace in the human community. I am also satisfied that religions including Islam, in essence, call for peace and compassion.

It was not long after Leibniz made mockery of the plan developed in 1731 to establish perpetual peace among Christian governors, deeming the “pax perpetua” as a plan that reminded him of an obituary posted in a cemetery, that Kant removed it from the cemetery and used it to characterize his political and moral plans. He tried to prove that peace is essential from a moral and intellectual perspective and attainable in practice. This incident can serve as an example of a complementary trend in human history and civilization. What is important is how we can learn from history.

Here, I would like to draw your attention to a delicate yet significant difference between knowing and learning. The secret to our learning little from history is that if history turns into a perception with a general concept, then we would know about historical incidents but never learn from them. Unfortunately, peoples will have to learn from the bitter incidents they themselves experience and suffer from in history and perhaps one of the tragic aspects of being a human rests in this bitter fact.

If one could learn from sacred texts and history without having to cry and suffer from pain, many of enormous disasters stemming from war and violence could have been eschewed. If we could learn without suffering, only these very few statements from the Holy Book would have been sufficient for the whole humanity: “He will judge amongst the clans and will scold many a clan and they would break their swords to use as plough and their spear to dig up valleys. No tribe would draw their swords on another one and there will be no war any longer.”

In Islam it is common to say “Salam” when encountering others. Salam means both peace and peace in the eternal Heavens. From the viewpoint of Quran, Dar-al-salam
is the House of Peace and Salam is one of Divine names in Quran because the spirit of God is in itself benevolence in which there is no wickedness. God has called humans to the House of Peace, a House that can and must be set up on this very earth.

The great elixir the alchemists have been looking for is God’s compassion. It is with the aid of His fully compassionate name that we can overcome violence and war and our lives can be filled with compassion and joy. The name of God, which is the name of all perfections, virtues, beauties and realities, must not be used as a harbinger of war and hatred. One must not speak ignorantly of the Crusades or call terror a holy war.

With the experience humans have gained today, the tendency in their conscience toward peace, compassion and empathy has been fostered. Violence, those committing violence, and the concerns war, terror and insecurity have generated for humans have reinforced this tendency even further. There had to be centuries of bloodshed so everyone would accept the advantage of dialog over war, compassion over hatred and peace over violence today. All of us, however, understand clearly that there is a long distance between the acceptance of this, which is crystal clear today, and its actual realization in the domestic and international relations. Nevertheless, further attention by human conscience toward peace is in itself a great step toward a better world and this should be realized with the assistance of all peace lovers and justice seekers of the world.

The important point is that we can’t call for peace among humans and yet neglect the most significant element that leads to violence and hatred. From among all the elements that can provoke violence, a lack of justice, discrimination, aggression and humiliation of nations by the powerful states are the most significant ones.

In fact, the general and inclusive discipline according to which rulers and the deprived set up order in their social life and humans regulate their interaction is a discipline based on justice -an issue Islam has put an effort into its realization.

The infamous contrast claimed between justice and freedom in the contemporary Western political philosophy is not contrast indeed but results from a lack of sufficient contemplation about the relationship between freedom and justice. Justice is not justice without freedom but a false impression of justice. The share of each and every citizen of a country of the international community of freedom can’t be impinged upon and yet justice be claimed to have been administered. Justice essentially means that every person can practice their rights. A lack of or impinging upon freedom is the most unjust thing that can happen.

Justice is the dignity of a free human, as treating slaves in a just and fair manner is not the kind of justice that humans deserve. The same is true about the freedom that is given to the hungry and underprivileged. This is phantasm of freedom rather than genuine freedom.
If justice without freedom is nothing but oppression, freedom without justice means freedom of assaulting, plundering, spreading poverty, corruption and cruelty. Although segregation of freedom and justice in terms of concept is correct, anyone who makes an effort to introduce them separately in real life situation - in spite of the fact that they might champion justice and freedom - they should know that their efforts are doomed to failure.

What is interpreted as social solidarity in the language of sociologists is realized only when justice and freedom are realized together. The more the solidarity is sustained, the stronger peace and stability will become.

Peace among the people of one country would be sustained and the social discipline and stability would deserve to be construed as peace only when they are based on freedom and justice. From that perspective, peace among peoples is entirely similar to peace between the people of one country.

If we really suffer from violence and destructive conflicts and want peace to materialize, we should confront the despotic governments who impinge upon freedom and justice on the one hand and rise to challenge unjust rules and regulations on an international level on the other.

How come peoples should be victims of humiliation and surrender as they are deterred by discriminatory and double-standard policies from practicing their rights through any conciliatory way, and yet we expect that there will not be any violence and hatred in retaliation.

If violence is justified in the name of religion or human values, we should not be deluded and deceived into being affected by the propaganda carried in the hands of those with unsatiated demands, who blame religion for serving as the origin of all the violence. Here, religion, like the underprivileged and humiliated human, is being victimized. Islam, and in general all genuine religions, call for peace. Actual peace can be achieved only in the light of God's sovereignty. It is only God's sovereignty, which is the very extensive sovereignty of compassion — compassion toward God, toward humans, and toward the whole world as a sign of God's magnificence and beauty that can free us all of fear, greed, hatred and violence and turn our self-worshipping and profiteering wills into a strong determination for devotion, friendship and kindness.

War and violence are rooted in the exorbitant demands of those humans who are deprived of the blessing of justice and love for fellow humans. It is correct that we have witnessed wars during history that have occurred in the name of religion including the religious wars in Europe that lay the foundation for establishment of secularism in the West. However, previous experience has taught us that with purging the social life arena from religion would not lead to the uprooting of war and violence but only make them recur in a more radical and cruel way. An example of this, are the wars that were
waged in the secular world or launched by those governments who claim to be supportive of secularism. Those wars are by no means comparable to religious wars in terms of size and the spiritual and material damages they caused. It is sufficient evidence if the devastating World War, the Cold War as well as tens of other conflicts in every corner of the world lead us to the conclusion that violence and war have stemmed from other causes than religion and that if those roots are dried up, religion and human values would no longer be abused as a means of violence.

I would like to end my speech with this subject that the Prophet of Islam has been cited as calling Jesus as his brother. Our Prophet, who is the teacher of compassion and peace, has been relayed the story of love and pain and peace in such an eloquent and expressive way so anyone who is capable of hearing this would undoubtedly acquire the experience of delving into the lucid spring of compassion of Mary and Jesus.

The Prophet of Islam is the Prophet of peace, compassion and justice, as Jesus is an epitome of freedom and kindness. Followers of the path of the Prophet, like the followers of Moses and Abraham and all the great Prophets of God cannot claim to adhere to religion and yet turn deaf ears on the message of peace, security and justice from these Prophets.

Those seeking violence are committing crime against humans and this crime becomes double when they try to justify violence, war and hatred by distorting the Divine religion. Religion should be seen and understood as expressed by the Prophets although what has happened throughout history may sometimes be worlds apart from the actual calls by the Prophets. Justice, which is the social context of the Prophets’ message, should be respected and demanded for all humans. Those biased states seeking power should be isolated so we can reach perpetual peace and humans can live together peacefully and safely.
When reading the Catholic Catechism, one realises that there is a dialogue of conviction between man and God; there is a dialogue of beauty between man and God. Each one of us has a spark of light in his soul and in the words of Shiekh Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi the author of the “Wisdom of Illumination” ex oriente lux, out of the East came light. It is our choice to either to return to our Creator with ugliness and to be judged, or in terms of light, if each atom of light returns to its creator then there would be light. Today we invent new words to basically say what Karen Armstrong carries so brilliantly around the world “compassion”. We are egotistical and it is our egotistical selves rejecting compassion that makes our world such a raw place to live in for so many millions of people. Professor Prahalad of Michigan University talks about building from the bottom of the pyramid; he talks about the three or four billion people at the bottom of the pyramid who will either become facilitators or slaves. Cristovam Buarque from Brazil talks about “the gold curtain that fell in the place of the iron curtain” that protects 1.7 billion consumers with producers also of those laptops, those mobile phones, those wonderful gadgets which are not produced by the rest of humanity.

When Al Gore spoke in Singapore about ‘Global Warming’, I spoke about ‘Human Warning’, ‘Human Warning’. I have suggested to Federico Mayor the possibility of producing a second film entitled ‘Inconvenient Truth’, to talk about the anthropology of human suffering.

In 1988, 500 NGO’s supported the presentation of the call for a New International Humanitarian Order. The template should not be an international law of war from which we draw concessions, but an international peace initiative that takes into consideration the three categories of humanity. When we spoke of deforestation, when we spoke of the prognosis of the Meadows Report, 40 billion tonnes of top soil being blown away every year, nobody listened. We spoke about natural disasters, man-made disasters, refugees, street children the basic themes were respect for life, life of the planet and life of those living on this planet. Dennis Meadows’ report was updated not so long ago by the Club of Rome and MIT- humanity is burdening the carrying capacity of Mother Earth by the factor of 1.2 and 85% of consumption and depletion of natural capital is caused by the ‘rich minority’ of the 20% of the world population.

George Schultz, Henry Kissinger, Sam Nun and Bill Perry reiterated in January, “the accelerating spread of nuclear weapons, nuclear know- how, nuclear material that brought us to a nuclear tipping point”. So mutually assured destruction looks us in the face. Mutually assured survival is what this meeting is about.

Opium is being grown in Iraq today, thanks to the transfer of technology from Afghanistan, because vegetables are too expensive to grow in the face of imported food stuffs.
In terms of the Middle East region, ESCWA speaks of five pressing issues: the regional political predicaments of instability, violence and conflict, the exploiting demography, water scarcities and stark sub-regional disparity and gender disparity.

I am told that 60% of the population in Iraq today is women; that there are 3 million widows; over 2 million orphans and over 4 million displaced persons.

Today, we have a choice. Either to turn to the hatred industry which is winning and I would remind you that the hatred industry is winning. For example, the banking system asks for collateral, but the hatred industry does not ask a nihilist for collateral, it asks for his or her life and they give that life. Whether you want to understand it as an excuse or not is up to you.

I believe firmly in the sanctity of human life so in addition to working against xenophobia, anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination, I call upon you to work for the sanctity of human life and the celebration of human life in identifying through common standards, an understanding of our contribution, even symbolically to the coat hanger of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights sixtieth anniversary in December this year. Gareth Evans, Executive Director of the International Crisis Group of the importance of the right to protection. Under International Humanitarian Law, civilian protection means that people have the right to have their basic needs met, as well as to be protected from personal violence. Throughout the conflicts in the Middle East region, all parties have abused human rights on all sides. Commitment to civilian protection should strengthen and empower the grassroots, motivate civil societies and give choice to the silenced, not the silent, but the silenced majority whilst marginalising extremists. Dialogue has been silenced since 11th September 2001, so if we want to do something about activating civil society then let us not do it simply by putting out posters labelled ‘Civil Society Organisation, Human Rights Organisation – open for business’, because in reality that is hypocrisy because it is not addressing all sections of society.

We need to teach and to learn from each other, hence the Erasmus Mundus programme, almost unique to Europe, should extend to other parts of the world. The rich have to put themselves in the shoes of the poor. President Köhler of Germany has initiated a corps of ‘green helmets’ of Muslims and Jews who are building schools in Rwanda. When I travelled to Srebnica with Yossi Sarid the then Minister of Education of Israel we had the experience to talk about peace in the Middle East and peace for the Balkans. We never imagined that the hatred, the palpable, tangible hatred would move to the Middle East region so quickly, but it is there today.

The Human Development Report tells us that 2 million children die each year for want of a glass of clean water and adequate sanitation. On the other hand, expenditure on arms in the Middle East region is approximately 60 billion dollars at the time, when sadly the investment in human security is overlooked, disregarded.
I have been writing about the importance of Zakat for over a quarter of a century. At least one country in our region with the barrel of a 102 dollars is making a killing of over 1 billion dollars a day. If the international community is interested in partnering in hotels and high rise apartments and luxury tourist spots and international venues for golf entertainment and table tennis or any other form of tennis there is, all the ball games, then this is the reflection on the total lack of morality.

We cannot continue to accuse Europe of abusing migrants from our part of the world if we continue to be racist in using and abusing the Asian migrants in our West Asian region. The standards of protection and treatment and the empowerment of these people should be universal and it is not that we do not have the money but in the past 50 years one third of all expenditure in our region has been on arms, one third on development and one third on corruption. So the first third and the second third benefit corporations broadly defined, not global civil society but global corporate society. We should not speak about Global Social Responsibility (GSR) as icing on the cake but of hot-housing the parallel economies of drug lords, war lords and hot-housing the extremism that we claim to fear. We need to have some hope about collective security and enabling environments and mutually assured survival. The Coexistence Expedition which was approved by the Nordic Councils, comprised of 5 Nordic countries, is a report I hope to present to the European Union at some time soon. This report comprises five short statements: overcoming the security agenda; ensuring the freedom of religion; creating public spaces for coexistence; ensuring judiciary independence and empowering the powerless.

We all know the roots of misgovernance, but the celebration of a diversity of traditional communities is essential to citizenship. In the words of W.H. Auden, ‘Civilization is measured by the degree of diversity attained and the degree of unity retained’. So either you look at our West Asia - North Africa region, and I am not being regional-centric I hope you don't misunderstand me, but I refer to it simply because our level of development is barely above that of Sub-Saharan Africa despite the enormous contradiction of dizzying heights of wealth and the depth of depression and poverty. We talk of a Social Charter to embody a code of ethics for the region and responsibilities in outlining rights and entitlements but this can only happen if this body evolves into a policy form. Let us lay down some policy parameters. V.A. Panandiker reminds us of the problems – population growth, poverty and deprivation, slow economic development, high illiteracy and high infant mortality. What about a common minimum agenda recognising the sovereignty of the citizen, the sovereignty that begins our own homes, controlling population growth, economic growth with equity and restructuring institutions of governance? What about restructuring a Zakat institution by whatever name it may be called – altruism, philanthropy, empowerment. If we want international accountable management, why do we not ask the former Prime Minister of New Zealand and Director General of WTO, Mike Moore to take it over and to run it efficiently by using an asymmetric approach to
focus on empowering the poor. Or do we basically believe in the survival of the fittest, and the fattest?

Belgium has an administrative capability in its former colonies which is remarkably large for a small country. When the water levels rise will they return as climate refugees? Will that be the euphemism?

Bill Clinton promised 15 billion for HIV in Africa. George W. Bush speaks of HIV and Malaria. Are these not trends? Can’t we speak about the human condition in the world or is it that we can’t because somehow humanity does not bring in the financial return that we expect. It is naïve, like my friend Sergey Kapitza said, to suggest that humanity rules the world?

So the lessons learnt should include more involvement of policy leaders and systematic institutional reform; stakeholders to play a productive role or a practical role in governance in their country; the need to put in place a mechanism for civil society to monitor and audit such actions so that the elected governments remain accountable; the need for civil society to play a more effective role in governance and to speak with a more coherent and informed voice. It is essential for civil society organisations to establish their authority based on the credentials of their spokespersons and organisations. Effective implementation of public policies could be much more effective if civil society could be involved in these tasks from the beginning. Look at housing and urban development. Who wants a house that somebody has patronisingly built for them? Would people not like to know something about the details of their house, not only in terms of the actual housing and the short-term, but the medium-term of the maintenance of the community around that housing and about what it means in terms of developing identity?

Dr. Lother Brock talks about TIM Territoriality, Identity and Movement (Migration) (TIM). We urgently need a conference to discuss carrying capacity for this globe at the level of each region. The French call it aménagement de territoires. We need not only good governance but more problem solving of the physical, human and natural resources to move towards a recovering capacity. Effective implementation of public policies could be much more effective if intellectual research findings could extend beyond the more educated elites and to reach out to ordinary citizens. Experience sharing of civil society organisations, I know sometimes we say ‘well lets get on with doing what we can, with the best we can do’ but on the other hand, sharing knowledge builds a campaign strategy.

On a scale of 10 we may not agree on all 10 points, but let us at least develop a framework of collaboration and by all means a framework for disagreement in a civilized context. It is not a question whether we are with you or against you. It is a question of how we can develop an understanding of what it takes to stabilise the world before it is too late.
In an non oil economy, labour is the main engine of wealth. Oil dependence has had political effects similar to the economic effects of the “Dutch Disease” when Holland discovered hydrocarbon resources in the North Sea. They overspent and overspent. The rentier economies or economics depend on oil and foreign aid stimulus according to political science and scientists. We depend on greed and grievance. Scholars tell us that oil rents eventually become state institutions and this hollowing out of the state occurs in the context of growing grievance, but in a rentier economy, huge revenues from oil or external financial transfers actually create a disincentive to work. A de-linking occurs between wealth and work; a de-linking to most industrial and agricultural activities. Societies turn from production to consumption. The good news is that in early January of this year a GCC Common Market was set up with a combined economy of 715 billion dollars. Trade within the GCC currently stands at 10% of total foreign trade and over the next two years it is expected to rise by 25%, it is only a step in the right direction. When we look at the wider region much more is needed and Morgan Stanley tells us that the total resources of sovereign wealth funds stands at about 2.9 trillion dollars mainly from Asian cash rich countries of oil exporters.

The time has come to look at the example of the Helsinki Process and recognise that security (basic and current), economy and social development, culture and humanitarian law are a package that have to be put on the table of global and regional commons and a commitment has to be demanded from everyone who considers that they are civilised contributors to a civilised and safe future for their children and their children’s children.
The Encounter of Montserrat on Religions and the Building of Peace
II. The Declaration of Montserrat on Religions and the Building of Peace
isleading information on the origin of conflicts requires a clear cut analysis of the relation between religious feelings and violence, in order to advance towards the building of peace through its prevention and peaceful resolution. Unless we carefully analyse and communicate this relationship, some media and many people in the world will continue to wrongly think and perceive that religion is often fuel for violence. Indeed, violence is mostly originated at the level of power, resources and ideologies, and religion is often misused to stir up these conflicts.

In the year 1994, in the city of Barcelona, an important meeting of representatives of different faiths and religious organisations took place, (1) and the participants unanimously concluded that, based on our common humanity, common vision and the shared values of fraternity, human solidarity and love, religions should never again be the origin of confrontation but of conciliation.

The dramatic and endless conflicts in the Middle East, as well as recent tragic developments in other parts of the world, require solutions prompted by the awareness, commitment and involvement of religious leaders and civil society, which must urge political will and action to the decision-makers. Within this fra-

mework, the imposition of a double standards policy by some countries is a threat to peace and stability and complicates the role of religions that are working for justice in such complex environments.

We are witnessing a growing deterioration of global governance. This is visible in various issues: from climate to finance, from law to social justice, from human rights to decent work. These threats have created a sense of lack of security at the human level.

In moments of crisis, religions must provide hope and trust to humankind. Moreover, it is particularly relevant that religions help to maintain values in an increasingly valueless economic and social global system. Civil society, based on universal human values, has become a central player in addressing global issues for another kind of governance.

It is therefore through an alliance of values that religions and civil society can act on political institutions, at the local, national and international level to provide hope, justice and progress.

As stated in the Alliance of Civilizations Report and others, we must enhance efforts to bridge the divides between religions and cultures through dialogue and concrete action because religions and cultures are intertwined. We must overcome the misperceptions, stereotypes, biased language and concepts reproduced by the media and frequently echoed by irresponsible leadership. Religions must stay together to co-exist harmonically and work jointly to build a common future. We must challenge attitudes that spread the appearance of links between religion and violence, extremism and even terrorism.

In this context, there is a most urgent need to promote action which can counteract the present situation and trends, based on force and imposition. We must encourage action-oriented

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behaviours and attitudes, and widely spread knowledge on the real root causes of the conflicts –including, when appropriate, the misuse of religions and ideologies. We must provide possible solutions to build peace in the minds of people, particularly in the minds of social and political actors as well as the mass media.

Therefore, assembled in the inspiring mountain and abbey of Montserrat, and within the framework of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we reconfirm our full endorsement of the principles enshrined in the Declaration, as well as in other international documents and agreements, that guarantee the right and full respect of freedom of religion and other beliefs, and encourage dialogue and interaction with people of other belongings and identities, whether they be believers or not. In this respect, rapid and efficient encounter and sharing among representatives of religions and with national and international policy-makers appears to be essential, especially to identify common values and standards to learn to live with our differences.

We underline the significance, nowadays, of identities which, leaving aside extremisms, become the firmest base for an effective model of international coexistence.

We are convinced that a culture of dialogue, alliance, non-violence and peace must be built with full respect for human rights, the UN Charter and the rule of law. Such a shared culture of peace needs to give creative expressions to the teachings of the world’s religious traditions, which have stressed with a sense of otherness and brotherhood that we are all responsible for one another. In political terms, the only security that is practically possible and morally sound is “shared security”. We voice loudly our resolved support for all those committed to such a shared project.

We call on religious leaders at all levels, from the highest hierarchies to the grassroots level, to enhance and exercise their crucial role as actors of peace and mutual understanding.

We call on civil society, the institutional actors and the media to work, hand in hand, to diligently and tirelessly, with resolve and imagination, to achieve and go beyond the Objectives of the Mi-
Religions and the Building of Peace: The Encounter and Declaration of Montserrat.

illennium and, in this way, accelerate the transition from the use of force to word and dialogue, from violence to intercultural and interfaith harmony, from clash to alliance, from an economy of war to an economy of global development, from a culture of war to a culture of peace, based on justice and freedom.

We make a special appeal to the religious, educational, academic, scientific and artistic community as well as to intellectual associations and think tanks. Because of their very nature, they should be champions in the teaching and learning of human rights, tolerance, values and better gender balance.

We invite all cultural expressions to participate in the building of and international architecture through intercultural dialogue which shall strengthen a shared culture of peace.

We call upon media to contribute to avoid the wide dissemination of stereotypes and biased images, and to promote better understanding between different cultures and religions.

We call on political leadership, governments and international organizations – and particularly through an in-depth reformed United Nations system – to unite their efforts, guided by the “democratic principles”(3), to face the challenges threatening human kind. We are convinced that if humans want, they can transform the world. As it is acknowledged by all religions, nothing is beyond the distinctive human creative capacity.

Montserrat, Barcelona, 10th of April of 2008

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(3) Constitution of UNESCO, 1945
II.b) The signatories to the Declaration

Federico Mayor  
President  
Foundation for a Culture of Peace

Seyed Mohammad Khatami  
President  
Foundation for Dialogue among Civilisations

S. S. Aram I  
Catholicos of Cilicia  
& President Middle East Council of Churches

Joan Enric Vives  
Bishop of Urgell  
Co-Prince of Andorra

Abdulaziz O. Altwajiri  
Director General of ISESCO

Rabbi René Samuel Sirat  
Vice-president  
European Conference of Rabbis

Mar Odisho Oraham  
Bishop of Europe  
Assyrian Church of the East

Kjell M. Bondevik  
President  
Oslo Centre for Peace and Human Rights
Religions and the Building of Peace: The Encounter and Declaration of Montserrat.

Candido Mendes de Almeida
Secretary General
Academy of the Latinity

William F. Vendley
Secretary General
World Conference of Religions for Peace

Josep Maria Soler
Abbot of Montserrat

Roberto Savio
Responsible for International Relations
World Political Forum

Paul Ortega
Secretary General
Pax Romana – ICMICA

Gary Vachicouras
Executive Director, Foundation for Interreligious and Intercultural Research and Dialogue

Manuel Manonelles
Secretary and Coordinator of Encounter and Declaration of Montserrat
II.c) Endorsements of the Declaration

The following personalities endorsed the Declaration even though they were unable to attend the event:

- H.R.H. Prince El Hassan bin Talal
- Mário Soares
- Rabbi Arthur Schneier

**In situ endorsements**

At the end of the public event, which took place at the Façade Room of the Montserrat Abbey, the participants were asked to endorse the Declaration of Montserrat:

- David Minoves i Llucià: Director General for Co-operation and Development and Humanitarian Action, Generalitat de Catalunya
- Jordi López Camps: President of the Executive Committee, Patronat de la Muntanya de Montserrat
- Joan Massa: Secretary of the Mithras of the Bishop of La Seu
- Fèlix Martí Ambel: UNESCO Centre of Catalonia
- Jamyang Tashi Dorje: Spiritual Director, Sakya Tashi Ling
- Josep Lluís Suárez i Garcia: Counsellor, Evangelic Council of Catalonia
- Joan Botam i Casals: President, Ecumenical Centre of Catalonia
- Ignasi García Clavell: Former Secretary General of Religious Affairs, Generalitat de Catalunya
- Lahcen Saaou: President, Cultural Islamic Council of Catalonia
- Mohamed Halhoul: Spokesperson, Cultural Islamic Council of Catalonia
- Mohamed Tojgani: President, Imam Council of Belgium
- Joan Miguel i Rodríguez: Mayor, Monistrol de Montserrat
- Jorge Burdam: Responsible of the Dpt. of Tradition and Jewish Culture / Israeli Community of Barcelona
- Joel Cortés Casals: President, Permanent Commission – Spanish Evangelic Church
- Marek Pernal: Consul General, Consulate General of Poland
- Josep Antoni Carbonell: Pax Romana – Catalonia
- Arcadi Oliveres: President, Justícia i Pau
- Eduard Ibáñez: Director, Justícia i Pau
Religions and the Building of Peace: The Encounter and Declaration of Montserrat.

Alfons Banda i Tarradellas  
President, Fundació per la Pau

Jordi Armadans i Gil  
Director, Fundació per la Pau

Víctor Terradellas i Maré  
President, Fundació CAT món

Luis Rodríguez Serrano  
President, Estaca, Church of Jesus Christ of Saints of the Last Days

Ayaz Hussain  
Consul General, General Consulate of Pakistan

Thubten Wangchen  
Director, Fundació Casa del Tibet

Francisco López Segrera  
Academic advisor, Global University Network for Innovation-UPC

Manuela A. Condeminas  
Consol Honorary General, Consult General of Malaysia

Antoni Bayés de Luna

Maria Clara de Bayés de Luna

Josep Ribera  
Director, Fundació CIDOB

Albert Estrada-Vilarrasa  
Consul General, Consulate General of Slovenia

Francesc Torradeflot  
UNESCO Association for Interreligious Dialogue

Arxiprest Joan  
Orthodox Church, Patriarchy of Serbia

Pilar de Vilar

Mª. Rosa Ocaña  
Delegate for Ecumenism, Orthodox Church, Patriarchy of Serbia

Paco Jiménez-Salinas  
Lawyer, Conflicts mediator

Mª Mercè Sallera  
Delegate for Catalonia, Aragon, Valencian Community, Baleares and Andorra of the Movimento dei Focolari

Francisca Pi Pérez  
Movimento dei Focolari and Magazine “Ciutat Nova”

Amparo Gómez Olmos  
Movimento dei Focolari and Magazine “Ciutat Nova”

Mª Rosario Aoiz  
Chair, Association Human Forum Alliance for a New Humanity

Rosa Cadaso  
Vice-President Alliance for a New Humanity

Rosa Serrahima  
Movimento dei Focolari

Dechen Shak Dagsay  
Tibetan Mantra Singé

Elisenda González García  
Fundació Casa Tibet

Rev. Pare Aurel Bunda  
Archpriest Romanian Orthodox Church

Joan Hernández Serret  
Secretary of the Grup de Treball Estable de Religions (GTER)

Luís Rodríguez  
Mormon Church

Benjamí Planes  
President, Evangelic Council of Catalonia
The Declaration of Montserrat on Religions and the Building of Peace

• Later endorsements

Personalities

Mikhail S. Gorbachev
President
World Political Forum

Jorge Sampaio
UN High Representative
for the Alliance of Civilizations

Mary Robinson
President
Ethical Globalisation Initiative

Gunnar Stälsett
Bishop Emeritus of Oslo
Moderator of the European Council of
Religious Leaders

Colin Williams
Secretary General
Conference of European Churches

Vartan Gregorian
President
Carnegie Corporation
of New York
Other endorsements

Other endorsements have also been received from different institutions and organisations.

These include, particularly, one from CONAIE, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, which expressed its support for the Declaration in a manifesto signed in Quito on September 10, 2008. This endorsement was publicly reaffirmed at the Barcelona headquarters of the Foundation for a Culture of Peace on October 6, at which CONAIE was represented by the mayor of Cotacachi, Auki Tituña Morales. The Amawtica School of Tiwanako (Bolivia), represented by Fernando Ergueta, also ratified the Declaration at this ceremony.

Those that have endorsed the Declaration also include UNESCO – FLACACU, the Latin American and Caribbean Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations, and the Order of the Christian Freemason Knights (Gran Priorato de Hispania).
III. Media impact
The Meeting and Declaration of Montserrat generated a great deal of impact in the media, particularly at national level but also internationally. Both the press and the audiovisual media (TV and radio) covered the event, devoting considerable time to developments. Televisió de Catalunya followed the meeting exhaustively in several editions of its news programmes, as well as broadcasting live reports from Montserrat during the programme “Els matins” and devoting major interviews in the programme “La nit al dia” on April 3 and 4 to the personalities involved. Catalunya Ràdio also provided extensive coverage, as did other radio stations and television networks.

*Interview with Federico Mayor. TV programme “La Nit al Dia” (TV3) which aired on April 9, 2008*

*A moment of the TV programme “Els matins” (TV3) which aired on April 10, 2008*
Interview with Seyed Mohammad Khatami. TV programme “La Nit al Dia” (TV3) which aired on April 10, 2008

As the following selection demonstrates, the written press, both conventional and electronic, also covered the meeting extensively.
Líderes religiosos instan a desvincular religión de violencia en la Declaración de Montserrat

El presidente de la Universidad de Montserrat, A. King, y el rabino Michael Azoulay, firmaron la Declaración de Montserrat en la que instan a desvincular la religión de la violencia.

La Declaración de Montserrat reconoce que la religión ha sido utilizada para justificar la violencia en diferentes contextos históricos y sociales. Los firmantes exigen que se desvincule la religión de la violencia y que se promueva la paz y la reconciliación.

La Declaración de Montserrat se ha firmado por representantes de diferentes confesiones religiosas, incluyendo musulmanes, judíos, cristianos y budistas.

La Declaración de Montserrat es un paso importante en el camino hacia la desvinculación de la religión de la violencia y la promoción de la paz en el mundo.
Religions and the Building of Peace: The Encounter and Declaration of Montserrat.
Líderes religiosos piden en Montserrat no relacionar religión con violencia

Líderes religiosos piden en Montserrat no relacionar religión con violencia
El papel de las religiones en la construcción de un nuevo orden internacional

¿La paz sea contigo?

La Declaración de Montserrat pide a los ciudadanos que se impliquen para acabar con los conflictos

FEDERICO MAYOR ZARAGOZA

De verdad queremos la paz que nos soñamos? Saham, Saham... (paz) y, en continuación, la intranquilidad, el enfrentamiento, la confrontación. Si quieres la paz, prepara la guerra. Ha sido el adagio perverso que, para beneficio de los productores de armamento, se ha utilizado desde el origen de los tiempos por parte del poder, que disponía, como un supuesto incuestionable, de las vidas de sus vasallos. Y así hasta estos turbulentos, pero esperanzadores albares de siglo y de milenio, porque se ha ganado en conciencia global y en conocimiento profundo de la realidad: porque la moderna tecnología de la comunicación permite la participación no preseencial, lo que forzará la autenticidad democrática, y porque -lo que es muy relevante- la mujer ampliará en pocos años el margen 5% que tiene hoy en día como porcentaje de influencia en la toma de decisiones. Y la conclusión será que la humanidad tomará en sus manos las ruedas de su destino y hará posible, por fin, el inicio de la Carta de la ONU: «Nosotros, los pueblos...».

Si, serán los pueblos, la sociedad civil, la que irá constituyendo progresivamente democracias genuinas, en las que los votantes cuenten, además de ser contados en la elección, en las que sean tenidos en cuenta todos los días y no solo en el momento del recuento. El gran cambio será la transición de subditos a ciudadanos, de una cultura de impunidad y violencia a otra de convivencia y conciliación, de la fuerza a la palabra. De preparar la guerra a preparar la paz. «Si quieres la paz, ayúda a construirla con tu comportamiento cotidiano», siendo actor y no espectador impasible y pasivo.

No hay economía de guerra sin guerra, sin pretexto para armarse hasta los dientes.
Cumbre ecuménica en Catalunya

Paz y Declaración de Montserrat

Las religiones muestran eficazmente su identidad si están en sintonía con los derechos del hombre

JOSEP MARIA Soler

Cada día que pasa se ve más claro el sentido de la reciente celebración en Montserrat del encuentro internacional sobre el papel de las religiones en la construcción de la paz. Promovido por la Fundación Cultura de Paz y en el marco del 60º aniversario de la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos, ha mostrado una vez más la necesidad de reafirmar ciertos principios y valores que superan la variedad de cada una para converger en una «regla de oro» común. Dado que son religiones que nos quedan más cerca, podemos recordar que la tradición y la justicia han confron- tado esta regla en el Decálogo, y la cristiana ha profundizado los diez mandamientos a la luz del único precepto del amor, enseñado y practicado por Jesús.

En estos días, la visita del papa Benedicto XVI a la Organización de las Naciones Unidas vuelve a poner de manifiesto la continuidad del ideal cristiano con la práctica de los derechos humanos. Y se convierte de nuevo en un reto el papel de Montserrat a la luz de su tradición secular; la acogida que ha propiciado a esta Declaración no es más que el último eslabón de una larga cadena de esta tradición. Nunca está de más reflexionar sobre el fundamen- to de los derechos humanos, su unidad, su carácter indivisible, la necesidad de su promoción.

UN MONASTERIO es un lugar en el que los monjes están bajos la mirada divina en la ascesis para pacificar el propio corazón, donde acogen la paz que Dios les da, donde construyen cada día la paz con sus hermanos de comunidad, donde se acoge a todo el mundo y se le ayuda a hallar la paz, donde se difunde el mensaje de la paz.

Con esto solo se bastaría para habé- relo recibido el encuentro del pasado 10 de abril. Pero tenemos un motivo más para habérlo vivido con jubilo. Este año se cumple el milenario del abad obispo Oliva, el fundador de Montserrat. Fue un hombre de corazón pacificado que trabajó por los derechos de la gente sencilla y pro- movió la justicia y la paz en su entorno. Lo hizo particularmente insti- tuyendo la Paz y Tregua de Dios en 1027, fruto de una asamblea de nobles y clérigos que después fue ratificada por el pueblo y se fue exten- diendo por Europa. Esa asamblea, que Pau Casals, el día que recibió en la citada sede de las Naciones Unidas el mejor honor de la vida, citó como el primer Parlamento demóc- rático [...]. Y fue en mi país donde hubo las primeras naciones unidas [...], se reunieron para hablar de la paz, porque los catalanes de ese tiempo ya estaban contra la guerra. Por eso, las Naciones Unidas, que trabajan únicamente para el ideal de la paz, están en mi corazón, por- que todo lo que se refiere a la paz le llega directamente.

En Montserrat, como en todos los monasterios benedictinos, la di- visa paz ocupa un lugar importan- te. Además, nuestro monasterio fue promotor y testigo de los Inici- cios de reconciliación de los dos bandos que lucharon en la guerra civil y, en el largo invierno hasta llegar a la democracia, se convirtió en un refugio emblemático. Los monjes no vivimos aislados de la sociedad. Es más, por las caracterís- ticas propias de Montserrat, esta- mos estrechamente vinculados a ella. Su latido nos llega de pleno y nos toca muy directamente. Ha si- do así desde la fundación del mo- nasterio, particularmente durante el siglo XX.

Los interrogantes que los mon- jes nos planteamos hoy creo que no están muy lejos de lo que puede plantearse cualquier persona en el fondo de su conciencia o en el con- texto de su lugar de trabajo o de re- lación social.

EN ESTE sentido, los monjes creemos que la fe cristiana y la vi- sión humanista que deriva de ella —visión que puede ser compartida en otros contextos religiosos y también desde una posición agnóstica, no creyente— debe contribuir a en- riquecer la sociedad, pero sin que- rer imponer; la visión humanista, debe estar presente como una propuesta válida, como una visión concreta del mundo y de la perso- na humana. Y debería ser tenida en cuenta a la hora de establecer unos criterios éticos basados en nuestra sociedad plural.

En el contexto mundial actual, todos tenemos la responsabilidad de difundir esta Declaración de Montserrat a favor de construir la paz y de ser nosotros mismos pro- motivores del diálogo, la justicia y la paz. En Abad de Montserrat.
IV. Annexes
IV.a) Websites

This is not a complete list but rather an overview of some of the principal projects presently being worked on in the area of interreligious peace dialogue, as well as the role of religions themselves in the promotion of peace.

• Interreligious:
  - Religions for Peace: www.wcrp.org
  - The European Council of Religious Leaders: www.rfp-europe.eu

• Ecumenical:
  - World Council of Churches: www.oikumene.org
  - Overcoming Violence Project: http://overcomingviolence.org/home.html
  - The Middle East Council of Churches: www.mec-churches.org
  - The Taizé Community: www.taize.fr

• Intra-religious initiatives:
  - Roman Catholic Church:
    - Pax Christi International: www.paxchristi.net
    - Saint Egidi Community: www.santegidio.org
    - No Death Penalty Campaign: http://nodeathpenalty.santegidio.org
  - Initiatives within the Islamic World:
    - The Amman Message: www.ammanmessage.com

• Religious communities and the United Nations:
  - United Nations – New York:
    - “Values Caucus”: www.valuescaucus.org
    - The Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations: www.rngo.org
Religions and the Building of Peace: The Encounter and Declaration of Montserrat.

- United Nations - Geneva:
  - CONGO Committee on Spirituality, Values & Global Concerns: www.ngocongo.org
  - Centre Catholique International Geneve: www.ccig-iccg.org

- Representative Offices:
  - Quaker United Nations Office: www.quno.org
IV.b) Reference documents on interreligious dialogue:

Declaration of Barcelona (1994)

Declaration on the Role of Religions in the Promotion of a Culture of Peace

DECLARATION OF BARCELONA

We, participants in the meeting, “The Contribution by Religions to the Culture of Peace,” organized by UNESCO and the Centre UNESCO de Catalunya, which took place in Barcelona from 12 to 18 December, 1994, Deeply concerned with the present situation of the world, such as increasing armed conflicts and violence, poverty, social injustice, and structures of oppression; Recognizing that religion is important in human life; Declare:

OUR WORLD

1. We live in a world in which isolation is no longer possible. We live in a time of unprecedented mobility of peoples and intermingling of cultures. We are all interdependent and share an inescapable responsibility for the well-being of the entire world.

2. We face a crisis which could bring about the suicide of the human species or bring us a new awakening and a new hope. We believe that peace is possible. We know that religion is not the sole remedy for all the ills of humanity, but it has an indispensable role to play in this most critical time.

3. We are aware of the world’s cultural and religious diversity. Each culture represents a universe in itself and yet it is not closed. Cultures give religions their language, and religions offer ultimate meaning to each culture. Unless we recognize pluralism and respect diversity, no peace is possible. We strive for the harmony which is at the very core of peace.

4. We understand that culture is a way of seeing the world and living in it. It also means the cultivation of those values and forms of life which reflect the world-views of each culture. Therefore neither the meaning of peace nor of re-
5. For some cultures, religion is a way of life, permeating every human activity. For others it represents the highest aspirations of human existence. In still others, religions are institutions that claim to carry a message of salvation.

6. Religions have contributed to the peace of the world, but they have also led to division, hatred, and war. Religious people have too often betrayed the high ideals they themselves have preached. We feel obliged to call for sincere acts of repentance and mutual forgiveness, both personally and collectively, to one another, to humanity in general, and to Earth and all living beings.

PEACE

7. Peace implies that love, compassion, human dignity, and justice are fully preserved.

8. Peace entails that we understand that we are all interdependent and related to one another.

We are all individually and collectively responsible for the common good, including the well-being of future generations.

9. Peace demands that we respect Earth and all forms of life, especially human life. Our ethical awareness requires setting limits to technology. We should direct our efforts towards eliminating consumerism and improving the quality of life.

10. Peace is a journey -- a never ending process.

COMMITMENT

11. We must be at peace with ourselves; we strive to achieve inner peace through personal reflection and spiritual growth, and to cultivate a spirituality which manifests itself in action.

12. We commit ourselves to support and strengthen the home and family as the nursery of peace. In homes and families, communities, nations, and the world:
13. We commit ourselves to resolve or transform conflicts without using violence, and to prevent them through education and the pursuit of justice.

14. We commit ourselves to work towards a reduction in the scandalous economic differences between human groups and other forms of violence and threats to peace, such as waste of resources, extreme poverty, racism, all types of terrorism, lack of caring, corruption, and crime.

15. We commit ourselves to overcome all forms of discrimination, colonialism, exploitation, and domination and to promote institutions based on shared responsibility and participation. Human rights, including religious freedom and the rights of minorities, must be respected.

16. We commit ourselves to assure a truly humane education for all. We emphasize education for peace, freedom, and human rights, and religious education to promote openness and tolerance.

17. We commit ourselves to a civil society which respects environmental and social justice. This process begins locally and continues to national and transnational levels.

18. We commit ourselves to work towards a world without weapons and to dismantle the industry of war.

**RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITY**

19. Our communities of faith have a responsibility to encourage conduct imbued with wisdom, compassion, sharing, charity, solidarity, and love; inspiring one and all to choose the path of freedom and responsibility. Religions must be a source of helpful energy.

20. We will remain mindful that our religions must not identify themselves with political, economic, or social powers, so as to remain free to work for justice and peace. We will not forget that confessional political regimes may do serious harm to religious values as well as to society. We should distinguish fanaticism from religious zeal.

21. We will favor peace by countering the tendencies of individuals and communities to assume or even to teach that they are inherently superior to
others. We recognize and praise the non-violent peacemakers. We disown killing in the name of religion.

22. We will promote dialogue and harmony between and within religions, recognizing and respecting the search for truth and wisdom that is outside our religion. We will establish dialogue with all, striving for a sincere fellowship on our earthly pilgrimage.

APPEAL

23. Grounded in our faith, we will build a culture of peace based on non-violence, tolerance, dialogue, mutual understanding, and justice. We call upon the institutions of our civil society, the United Nations System, governments, governmental and non-governmental organizations, corporations, and the mass media, to strengthen their commitments to peace and to listen to the cries of the victims and the dispossessed. We call upon the different religious and cultural traditions to join hands together in this effort, and to cooperate with us in spreading the message of peace.
**Preamble**

Our various religious traditions call us to promote a culture of peace. They promote peace based on their holistic understanding of the inviolable dignity of human life in relationship to their awareness of its sacred origin. Peace of the heart and mind and peace of society are intrinsically linked. Peace and justice are inseparable, as are truth and reconciliation. Peace is for the hungry to be fed, the poor to be sustained, the sick to experience care, the oppressed to be released and the marginalized to have a voice. Peace is protection against violence, and it is experienced when warfare and armed conflicts are translated into development and nation building.

Each particular culture is unique and can be understood as a set of shared meanings and values that inform a way of life. In our use of the term, a “culture of peace” refers to those peace-related meanings and values that can be widely shared by the world’s diverse cultures. Thus a culture of peace respects and is built from the contributions of the distinct and diverse cultures in the world. Religion is closely linked to culture and is a vital source for fostering a culture of peace.

**I: The Role of Religions in the Promotion of a Culture of Peace**

1. The spiritual dimension of religions: Religions cultivate the human spirit through spiritual practices that aim at the realisation of genuine peace both within each believer and in the wider human family. Its power can show itself in the ability to bear the unbearable, find hope where there appear to be no grounds for hope and in forgiving the unforgivable. It is also manifest in celebration of beauty and cultivation of virtue.
2. The ethical dimension of religions: From the spiritual depths of religions spring ethical systems which guide the lives of millions. Religious leaders on all levels can speak with moral authority on values that are deeply held and widely shared by most religious traditions and which correspond to the values in a culture of peace. Among these are respect for the inviolable dignity of each person expressed in concern for human rights, justice, compassion for the afflicted, care for the earth and its creatures, and commitment to non-violence.

3. The social dimension of religions: Religious traditions have vertical and horizontal structures that give them unique channels for influence and exchange of ideas and insights. In every town and village there is a place where people gather for worship: a church, a mosque, a synagogue, a temple or a gurudwara. Through varying types of networks these are linked to similar places in other locations, and to national and international bodies, thus allowing the interests of men and women everywhere to be heard by national and international leaders, and national and international insights to be disseminated to the local level. All religious traditions emphasise the importance of education, instruction and formation of children and young people. This social dimension of religions provides great potential for communication and thereby furthering a culture of peace.

4. The cultural dimension of religions: All religions relate to culture and can contribute to building traditions that support peace by interpreting sacred texts and traditions and applying them under changing circumstances. Thus they bind together the lives of past, present and future generations. Explicitly and implicitly religions tell and retell stories which form the identity of the faithful and define their relationships to others. Religious narratives have the power to confirm and to challenge the present order of things.

II: Elements of a Culture of Peace

1. A culture of peace is a way of living together in society which ensures the dignity of all. In a culture of peace the equal value of men and women is affirmed, as is the equal value of all regardless of their ethnicity or religious affiliation. A culture of peace promotes responsible stewardship of the natural environment and justice between the generations and permeates our relationships from the local to the global level.
2. A culture of peace fosters tolerance and dialogue. Tolerance can help in the search for harmony in difference and affirms the standards set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It should not mean acceptance of social injustice or the abandonment or weakening of one’s convictions. It means that one is free to adhere to one’s own convictions and accept that others adhere to theirs. From genuine tolerance follows a recognition of freedom of religion. A culture of peace leads to dialogue and supports the knowledge, respect and appreciation of the other as elaborated in our Berlin Declaration on Interreligious Dialogue (2008). Tolerance respects the dignity of the other.

3. Conflict is intrinsic in all cultures, but must not be allowed to lead to violence and oppression. Conflicting interests and views are not in themselves a threat to peace. They present a challenge to creatively harmonise different interests. In a culture of peace everyone should strive to transform situations of conflicting interests so that their power and dynamism are channeled into creative development which promotes peace and harmony.

4. A culture of peace is a culture of mutuality and shared security. A culture of peace nurtures mutual respect which allows all to participate with integrity in society. Promoting a culture of peace implies exploring together the concept of shared security, the recognition that the wellbeing and security of individuals and groups depend on that of the others, as elaborated in the 2006 Eighth World Assembly of Religions for Peace and the Religions for Peace World Summit of Religious Leaders on the Occasion of the G8 Summit, Hokkaido, Japan, 2008.

III: Ten Commitments to work for a Culture of Peace

As senior religious leaders in Europe we commit ourselves to further a culture of peace:

1. We will explore, emphasise and nurture those spiritual resources in our individual traditions which promote the values which are fundamental to a culture of peace. We will promote responsible interpretations of texts and traditions that are used or misused to promote strife among people.
2. We will lead by example and as role models seek to address conflict among ourselves and representatives of our religious traditions with peaceful means, transforming situations of conflicting interests into opportunities for dialogue and cooperation.

3. We will foster spiritual growth among people within our religious traditions and develop the formational side of our religions encouraging people to play a role in society as promoters of values of peace while showing in practice their respect for those with other religions, convictions or points of view.

4. We will ensure that the values of a culture of peace are known and promoted in all institutions and settings where there is religious education or training for children, thus ensuring that new generations grow up well equipped to meet the challenges of plural societies where people of different backgrounds must live together peacefully.

5. We will seek opportunities to promote policies and decisions in the political sphere that further peace, and we will together lift our voices, across religious divides, against forces which promote violence and block dialogue.

6. We will encourage all those within our faith communities who are involved in practical work of charity to understand themselves as ambassadors of a culture of peace and thus find inspiration to strengthen and develop this concrete caring expression of our religions.

7. We will foster interreligious dialogue among all people in Europe and on all levels, from the local communities to national and international leaders. We will encourage all to take note of the principles for interreligious dialogue spelt out in our Berlin Declaration on Interreligious Dialogue (2008).

8. We will explore the life and activities of our own religious communities critically to understand how and when they can be an obstacle to peace. We will engage in intra-religious dialogue with, and when necessary confront, those who belong to our own religions but whose practice of traditions are incompatible with peaceful coexistence.

9. We will be open to cooperation with all people of good will and all institutions, religious or not, who are promoting the basic values of a culture of peace.

10. We will make our explorations together and the content of this declaration known to religious people across our continent and to the wider public, and we will have a lasting commitment to its values and ideas recognising that a culture of peace can
only be realised in full in the long term as new generations are fostered and learn from the shortcomings of our present generations and from the insights we have gained in interfaith dialogue and praxis.

Photo: Leïla Ghandi
IV.c) Selected photographs from the meeting

Arrival and welcome in Montserrat
Religions and the Building of Peace: The Encounter and Declaration of Montserrat.
Meeting behind closed doors

Moments of encounter and debate
Religions and the Building of Peace: The Encounter and Declaration of Montserrat.

Ceremony of signature and presentation of the Declaration of Montserrat
Religions and the Building of Peace: The Encounter and Declaration of Montserrat.

Signature of the Book of Honour of the Monastery
Visit of the Monastery and Abbey

Photos: Francesc Parés
For updated information about
The Process of Montserrat on Religions and the Building of Peace
please visit:
www.culturadepau.cat/montserrat