



20 March 2012

Dear Jain Friends,

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Office of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for promotion of relations with people of different religious traditions, greets you most cordially as you celebrate, on April 5, the birth anniversary of 'Tirthankara' (Path-Finder) Vardhaman Mahavir. May this occasion bring you joy and peace!

Festivals such as this truly give us the opportunity not only to manifest and strengthen our friendship but also to reflect on how to cooperate in promoting peace and harmony in our society. The world today is increasingly becoming aware of the fact that in order to build peace at all levels of the society, in particular at the interreligious level, special attention needs to be paid towards the young offering them adequate education.

One of the fundamental goals of such an education is to inculcate in the young the value of human being in his or her innate dignity from which flow all the other values such as respect for the other including the respect for his or her conscience, religious freedom, equanimity, solidarity, justice, peace etc. A healthy facilitation of their character based on the consciousness of being part of the one human family and right motivation and guidance to channelize their energies and inventiveness positively will make them agents of peace, harmony and development in the society. The opposite will unfortunately result, as it often does, in chaos and destruction. Parents, teachers and all the other educators, therefore, are required to uphold and live these values themselves, besides being people of peace and harmony. Their personal examples will render their efforts in imparting these values more credible and effective.

As believers in our own respective religions that have the cause of peace at their hearts, it is our "common responsibility towards present and future generations, especially in the task of training them to be people of peace and builders of peace" (Pope Benedict XVI, *Message for the World Day of Peace, 2012*). Convinced therefore of our own personal and communitarian duty to educate the young people, may we help them attain a rich vision of peace and an ability to break down walls that separate and divide people, and to be peace-builders always and everywhere.

Wishing you A HAPPY MAHAVIR JAYANTI,

Yours sincerely,



Jean- Louis Cardinal TAURAN
President



Archbishop Pier Luigi CELATA
Secretary