SPORT at the SERVICE OF HUMANITY

DECEMBER 2020

This year has been a challenging time for humanity. But amidst the darkness, there is also light. As 2020 draws to a close we reflect on the lessons we have learned and focus on the things that are truly important, such as family, community and faith.

This year, we will observe the holidays with simplicity. Let us keep in mind Sport for Humanity's principles, especially Compassion and Love. By showing compassion and love to those in our communities, especially those less fortunate than ourselves, we lift each other up. When our compassion towards others goes beyond thoughts and is demonstrated through our words and actions, we encourage others to do the same. Together in this way, we can begin the process of healing the pain caused by divisiveness and intolerance, creating communities of love and unity.

This Holiday Season we are honoured to share with you messages of love and blessings from faith leaders from around the world. Together, we look forward to a new year filled with renewed faith and hope for a better world.

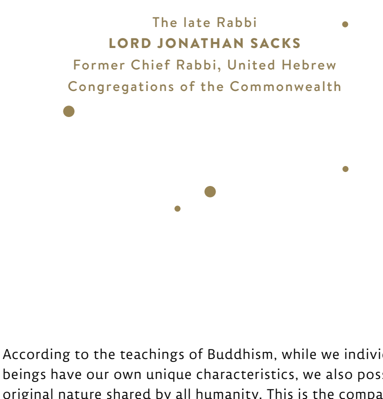
In Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh; the invisible God reveals His face, to all who seek Him with a sincere heart. The Divinity and humanity are united in salvific peace. This is what the angels in Luke's story of Jesus Christ's birth sang: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace for those he favours" (Luke 2:14).

In the long history of humankind, the world of sport, undoubtedly, has made a great contribution to the development of civilization by fostering and promoting friendship, fraternity, mutual respect and understanding, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, worldwide, especially among young people. Sport has always been an important and crucial bridge of building peace.

Precisely it is this unity of women and men of different religions and cultures in an atmosphere of brotherhood, friendship and mutual respect, is the dream of both H.H. Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Dr. Ahmad al-Tayyib, as expressed in the Document entitled "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together", signed together on 4 February 2019. The same values have been underscored again by His Holiness, the Pope, in his recent Encyclical Letter "Fratelli Tutti" (All Brothers), signed on 3 October 2020.

It is Christmas time. God, the Most Holy and the Most High, comes and dwells among us and transforms us with His divine love, compassion and solidarity, opening our eyes, our hearts and our minds, so that we recognize others as brothers, sisters and friends, regardless of their origin, ethnicity or religion.

His Eminence **CARDINAL MIGUEL ÁNGEL AYUSO GUIXOT**
M.C.C.J. President, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, The Holy See



The late Rabbi
LORD JONATHAN SACKS
Former Chief Rabbi, United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

On Chanukah, the Jewish tradition is to light a candelabrum for 8 nights in a row, adding one more candle each night. The simple symbolism of this candle-lighting is shared by so many faiths, not just Jews on Chanukah but Christians at prayer, Hindus and Sikhs at Diwali. This illumination reminds us of the power of the human spirit, sustained by memory and hope, to shed light in the midst of darkness and to move us beyond the fear that leads to repression in the first place.

For my flame does not threaten yours nor does yours diminish mine, and each time someone lights one, whatever his or her faith, the world becomes a little brighter for all of us. That's why religious freedom matters and why religious diversity enlarges us all.

According to the teachings of Buddhism, while we individual human beings have our own unique characteristics, we also possess the true, original nature shared by all humanity. This is the compassion, the cherishing of others as oneself, and the mind of warmheartedness for others.

The mind is developed through encounters and relationships with others. I believe that relationships developed through sport can cultivate respect for others, the mind of unity and gratitude for the people around you. In current difficult circumstances, the practice of compassion based on faith is crucial for all of us. As people of faith, we should strengthen solidarity with society, and share what we have with others. Mutual compassion, warmheartedness, sharing and gratitude - let us spread those good qualities in the world in 2021.

As we welcome the New Year, I hope you will spend a cheerful year in 2021 with wonderful relationships.

Rev. **KATSUTOSHI MIZUMO**
Director, Rissho Kosei-kai of Rome

Mr. **HABIB ABBAS MUSAVI**
Jakarta, Indonesia

Love is not just a matter of man to man relationship. Love brings friendship, brotherhood and communion with others. It even leads us to a new level of respect and compassion. It surpasses our social standards in any civilizations. Our Prophet Muhammad has proven it. It is told that a blind man cursed Prophet Muhammad on his face in daily routines. Notwithstanding, he fed him every day. And when this man got sick, the Prophet looked after him. His action won't come to our sense as a normal response we expect. But as I said, love brings us to another level of moral consciousness. And no religion teaches anything but love.

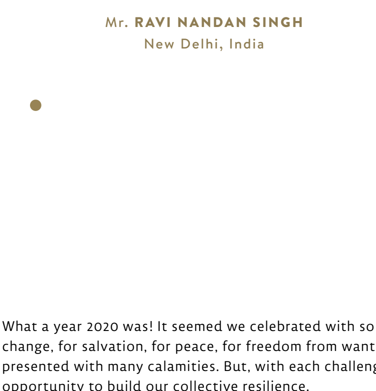
We've been through a lot this year. No exception. And yet we still try to celebrate Christmas together with the source and energy left in us. The fact that I am, as a Muslim, being offered this opportunity to say something to the upcoming celebrations, it means nothing else except that love has an incredible inner power to bring us together, no matter from which background we come; no matter what circumstances we are in.

Love is a universal attribute of giving to others without questioning why. It includes recognising that all mankind remain bonded by one great entity God, and therefore a perfect example to all mankind that we are entity of different branches with the mission of loving and being loved.

According to our African traditional Religion, humanitarian service is like the act of God, believing that Man is God to Man since we are made in his own image.

The year 2020 has been a year of a different kind of temptation. This has strengthened our faith and belief in our supernatural Being. Hopefully, our Faith will lead us to a better 2021, in the name of the Most High God and Our Great Ancestors. Amen.

Mr. **OWERE GEORGE OMO IDUHON**
Africa Traditional Religion



Mr. **RAVI NANDAN SINGH**
New Delhi, India

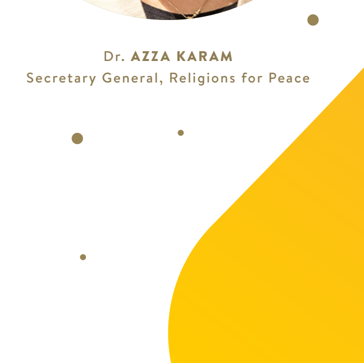
We have come to carry an unsure sense from 2020, as it comes to pass, that we might have a sporting chance to live. Gradually eased into that living, once at a secure place to look back, we would be the good spectators to this year gone by and the people it has taken. Unsure and hopeful. Amidst this passing it might occur to us, more surely, that the divine play reserves the toughest moves for itself.

Indeed, the Hindu Tantra Trika theology mentions that one form of divine play (līlā) is tirodhāna, self-veiling. The divine conceals itself from the world. On its return from the concealment, however, the promise of divine play (līlā/krīdā) lies in how freedom, bliss and fullness can sustain the play-element. Let us train and practise this metamorphosis in the plays of sports, arts, thought and sensitivity.

What a year 2020 was! It seemed we celebrated with so much hope for change, for salvation, for peace, for freedom from want… and then were presented with many calamities. But, with each challenge, came an opportunity to build our collective resilience.

In the Holy Quran, we are informed that as humans, we are somehow born to confront hardships, each a test of some sort, to build our resilience, and also to consolidate our faith. The verses of the Holy Quran are replete with diverse references to God's 99 names - each a characteristic we need to thrive, not just survive. They cover patience, deference, balance, communion, engagement, rejoicing, gratitude, and many, many more.

But you know what I find endearing and illuminating? They revolve around mercy, compassion and love. God, or Love, calls us to be creatures of compassion to self and other. And here is the magic: to be grateful to Him. Should gratitude elude us for some reason, St. Theresa of Avila, a creature of spiritual grace, asks us to "give God a compliment by asking great things of him". So let us give God many compliments, and ask Him to help us show love and compassion to self, society and planet - and thereby be agents of His infinite Mercy. Amen.



Dr. **AZZA KARAM**
Secretary General, Religions for Peace

On behalf of the Sport for Humanity family, thank you for your continued support and belief in our movement. While the pandemic has forced us to socially-distance ourselves from one another, you have all remained close to our hearts.

We look forward to a new year with faith and hope that the values we represent - Compassion, Love, Respect, Enlightenment, Balance and Joy - may inspire and guide our thoughts, words and deeds so that we may Live Like We Play!

PEACE BE WITH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON AND ALWAYS!

Join the Conversation. Share Your Story.
#LiveLikeYouPlay

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