



PONTIFICAL COUNCIL  
FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

*Christian and Shinto Followers Together:  
Protecting All Life*

MESSAGE TO FOLLOWERS OF SHINTO  
2020

Vatican City

Dear Shinto Friends,

1. This annual message is the first sent to the followers of Shinto by this Pontifical Council in the new Japanese era of REIWA, following the enthronement of the new Emperor. We offer our most fervent wishes for an era of “beautiful peace” to His Majesty the Emperor and to the people of Japan.

2. As we renew, once again, our annual message of greetings and sharing with all the followers of Shinto on the occasion of the new year, we take our inspiration from the theme chosen by the Catholic Church in Japan for the recent visit of Pope Francis to the Land of the Rising Sun: “Protect all life”. “Life”, particularly human life, in its mysterious origin and essence, in its beauty and unsurpassable value, is a fundamental element both of Shinto religiosity and of Christian faith.

3. We all are well aware that a commitment to defending and protecting human life requires a commitment to put an end to war and to promote nuclear disarmament. In this regard, Pope Francis exhorts the people of Japan and of all the world to work together to protect life through disarmament. “Your country is well aware of the suffering caused by war. Together with you, I pray that the destructive power of nuclear weapons will never be unleashed again in human history. Using nuclear weapons is immoral” (Video Message of the Holy Father Francis for his upcoming Apostolic Trip to Japan, 18.11.2019).

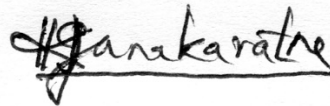
4. Dear friends, human life is also threatened on a daily basis and in so many situations by evils that humans have themselves brought about: producing and marketing unhealthy food, restricting access to medical assistance, refusing to accept life at its beginning or arbitrarily deciding to end it before its natural conclusion, desperate acts of suicide, death from violence or from preventable accidents, to name only a few. Healthy environments support healthy wildlife. Unfortunately, the continued health of our planet is threatened by the results of climate change: invasive species, disease, pollution, flooding, and a host of other dangers to life in all its forms.

5. We have a shared desire and an innate instinct to promote and protect all life. Deeply motivated by our respective religious teachings, let us join our efforts together, on the path of mutual respect and encounter, to protect all life. To realize this, let us continue to foster a culture of dialogue and fraternity.

6. May the solemn and joyful celebration of the new year, so deeply rooted in Japanese culture, be a true celebration of life, the “feast of life”!



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