

Christians and Jains: To build a better future, 26 November 2024

The Dicastery for interreligious Dialogue (DID) today issued a press communiqué stating that a meeting took place between the DID and an International Jain delegation led by the Institute of Jainology, London on 26th November 2024 in the offices of the Dicastery.

The respective delegations were led by Msgr. Indunil Kodithuwakku, Secretary of the DID, and Dr. Mehool H Sanghrajka, Managing Trustee of the Institute of Jainology. It was the fourth meeting of this type; the previous three were held in 1995, 2011 and 2016. There have also been several contacts between the Jain community and the DID since 1986, and the DID in collaboration with the local churches and Jain organisations in India, the United Kingdom and the United States, organised Jain-Catholic dialogue meetings in 2011, 2013 and 2015.

The meeting was held in an atmosphere of mutual respect and friendship. The participants, right at the beginning of the meeting, observed a minute of silence, in prayer, as a mark of respect, appreciation and gratitude to the late Cardinal Miguel Ayuso for his invaluable contribution to fostering interreligious dialogue, in particular, between Jains and Christians.

They expressed satisfaction with the cordial relations and cooperation that exist between both the Christian and Jain communities in countries where they live in close proximity.

After insightful presentations of papers by academic professors from each side on 'building a better future' by 1) 'embracing diversity and inclusivity' and 2) 'by caring for the earth the poor and the most vulnerable', the participants identified concrete areas of convergence, and resolved to do their bit, individually and collectively, to contribute to harmonizing differences in the society, respecting diversity as 'a gift of God' for humanity.

They discussed the Jain principles of 'Anekantvada' (non-absolutism) and 'Ahimsa' (non-violence) and the Christian concepts of "compassion", 'inclusion' and "justice" as guiding principles to make the world more inclusive, just and peaceful. They also stressed the need to make the Earth liveable and peaceful for all by responsible stewardship of the natural world, and by caring for all forms of life, and the earth.

They affirmed that the common elements present in both the religious traditions can help in enhancing cordial relationships, understanding and collaboration between Christians and Jains and will motivate them to work towards building a better future for everyone, joining hands with believers and all people of good will.