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## **CALL FOR UNION IN DIFFERENCE AND IN DIVERSITY DURING THE PERIOD OF DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE ORO CULT IN POBE**

The adoption by the General Assembly on January 15, 2018 of the resolution proclaiming May 16 as the International Day of Living Together in Peace is within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations , in particular, the resolute desire to preserve generations future of the scourge of war.

The 1990 Constitution defines Benin as a secular state, prohibits religious discrimination and guarantees freedom of thought, expression and religious practice, while respecting public order, in accordance with legislation and regulations.

In the biblical Tradition, the human person bears within himself the divine image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26) and is entrusted with the responsibility of caring for creation. The human person is capable of reasoning, learning and, with complete freedom, choosing what is good and avoiding what is evil.

“According to the Quran, all humanity is descended from Adam and Eve. An Arab is not superior to a non-Arab, and a non-Arab is not superior to an Arab; and whites are not superior to blacks, just as blacks are not superior to whites. No person is superior to another except in piety and good deeds. (Surah 2 called The Cow, v. 30 ff)”

The natural and civil right to religious freedom also includes the right to adhere or not to one religion, or to change to another.

Religious freedom therefore has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person.

Despite these noble teachings and realities, our societies face the consequences of wounds, past and present.

Injuries caused by avoidable violence and conflicts.

Injuries caused by differences in language between friends, brothers and sisters, colleagues, cohabitants, etc.

Injuries caused by taking radical positions without seeking consensus,

Injuries caused by value judgments on cultural facts or religious practices different from ours.

All forms of violence perpetrated on religious grounds must be seen as an attack on religion itself and on the true good of human society.

Just like other Christian and Muslim festivals, the periods of manifestations of the Oro cult are festive periods, of veneration, of purification of the city and should not be periods of degradation of the social fabric.

We are the same and are called to live together

We are all invited to work to prevent violence and rebuild broken communities;

We urge the media to avoid and counter hate speech as well as biased and provocative reporting;

We must encourage responsible behavior to avoid distortion and misinterpretation of facts related to the practices of a religion.

We reaffirm our commitment to respect for human dignity.

We are committed to being ambassadors of social cohesion and living together

Done in Pobè, July 16, 2024