



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON
"XENOPHOBIA, RACISM AND POPULIST NATIONALISM
IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL MIGRATION"**

Clementine Hall

Thursday, 20 September 2018 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Your Eminence,

Reverend Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am happy to receive you on the occasion of the World Conference on the theme "Xenophobia, racism and populist nationalism in the context of global migration" (Rome, 18-20 September 2018). I cordially greet the representatives from the United Nations Organizations, the Council of Europe, Christian Churches, in particular the World Council of Churches, and those of other religions. I thank Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, for the kind words he addressed to me on behalf of all the participants.

We live in times in which feelings that to many had seemed to be outdated appear to be reemerging and spreading. Feelings of suspicion, fear, contempt and even hatred towards other individuals or groups judged to be different on the basis of their ethnicity, nationality or religion, and as such, believed not to be sufficiently worthy to participate fully in the life of society. These feelings, then, too often inspire real acts of intolerance, discrimination or exclusion that seriously harm the dignity of those involved as well as their fundamental rights, including the very right to life and to physical and moral integrity. Unfortunately in the political world too, it happens that one gives in to the temptation to exploit the fears and the objective difficulties of some groups and to make misleading promises out of shortsighted electoral interests.

The seriousness of these phenomena cannot leave us indifferent. We are all called, in our respective roles, to nurture and promote respect for the inherent dignity of every human person

beginning with the family — the place in which we learn from a very tender age the values of sharing, welcoming, brotherhood and solidarity — but also in the various social contexts we engage in.

I think first of all of formators and educators who are asked for a renewed commitment so that, in schools, universities and other places of learning, respect will be taught for each human person, accepting the physical and cultural differences that distinguish them, overcoming prejudice.

In a world in which access to information and communication tools is ever more widespread, a special responsibility falls to those who work in the field of social communication, who have the duty to put themselves at the service of truth and to broadcast information taking care to promote a culture of encounter and openness to others with mutual respect for diversity.

Those, then, who reap economic benefits from the climate of distrusting the foreigner, whose irregular or illegal residence fosters and feeds the system of precariousness and exploitation — which at times reaches a level that gives rise to real forms of slavery — should make a profound examination of conscience in the knowledge that one day they will be held accountable before God for the choices they have made.

In the face of the spread of new forms of xenophobia and racism, the leaders of all religions also have an important mission: that of spreading among the faithful the ethical principles and values inscribed by God on the heart of man, known as the natural moral law. It is about making and inspiring gestures which can contribute to building up societies founded on the principle of the sacredness of human life and on respect for the dignity of each person, on charity, on fraternity — which goes well beyond tolerance — and on solidarity.

In particular, may Christian Churches be humble and hardworking witnesses to Christ's love. Indeed for Christians, the above-mentioned moral responsibilities assume an even more profound meaning in the light of faith.

The common origin and the unique bond with the Creator makes all people members of a single family, brothers and sisters, created in God's image and likeness as taught in biblical Revelation.

The dignity of all men and women, the fundamental unity of mankind, and the call to live as brothers and sisters are confirmed and further strengthened in the measure to which one receives the Good News that all are equally saved and reunited by Christ, to the point that — as Saint Paul says — “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for [we] are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28).

In this perspective, the other is not only a being to be respected by virtue of his or her inherent dignity but above all a brother or sister to be loved. In Christ, tolerance is transformed into fraternal

love, into tenderness and active solidarity. This applies above all in regard to the least of our brothers and sisters, among whom we can recognize the stranger, the foreigner with whom Jesus identified himself. On the Day of Judgment, the Lord will recall "I was a stranger and you did not welcome me" (Mt 25:43). But today too he asks us: 'I am a foreigner, do you not recognize me?'

And when Jesus told the Twelve: "It shall not be so among you" (Mt 20:26), he was not referring solely to the dominion of the heads of nations with regard to political power, but to the entire Christian being. Indeed, being Christian is a call to go against the current to recognize, welcome and serve Christ himself, abandoned in our brothers and sisters.

Conscious of the many expressions of closeness, welcome and integration toward the foreigners already present, I hope that from the meeting that just ended, many other initiatives of cooperation may occur so that together we can build more just and supportive societies.

I entrust each one of you and your families to the intercession of Mary Most Holy, Mother of tenderness, and I impart my heartfelt Apostolic blessing to you and your loved ones.