

THE MARRAKESH DECLARATION

January 27, 2016

On the Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities

In light of increasing violence in the Muslim world, mainly in the Middle East, the Marrakesh Declaration was written to promote peace among all people, regardless of religion. Also, because of the rise of radical, criminal groups that claim their message is of Islam, this document seeks to refute those radical Islamic terrorist groups.

Summary of The Marrakesh Declaration

The Marrakesh Declaration, written on January 27, 2016, modifies and reaffirms a commitment to the principles laid out in the 1,400-year old Charter of Medina, written in 622 C.E., which is a “Charter set up by Muhammad, outlining the rights and duties of all citizens and the relationship of the Muslim community to other communities on the basis of religious confession rather than tribal ties or ethnicity. [... It] recognized Jews as an integral part of the community, allied with Muslims but with religious and cultural autonomy [... and it is] considered the ideal model for an Islamic state.”¹

The most important aspect of the Declaration is that all of the participants in the Marrakesh Conference “Affirm hereby that [...] cooperation [among all religious groups] must be based on a “Common Word,” requiring that such cooperation must go beyond mutual tolerance and respect, to providing full protection for the rights and liberties to all religious groups in a civilized manner that eschews coercion, bias, and arrogance.”²

Over 250 Muslim leaders, scholars and intellectuals signed the Marrakesh Declaration, stating that they:

- Call upon Muslim scholars and intellectuals around the world to develop a jurisprudence of ... “citizenship” which is inclusive of diverse groups...
- Urge Muslim educational institutions and authorities to conduct a courageous review of educational curricula that addresses honestly and effectively any material that instigates aggression and extremism...
- Call upon politicians and decision makers to take the ... steps necessary to establish a constitutional contractual relationship among its citizens, and to support all formulations and initiatives that aim to fortify relations and understanding among the various religious groups in the Muslim World;

1 “Constitution of Medina,” The Oxford Dictionary of Islam, edited by John L. Esposito, *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, accessed March 15, 2016, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e449>.

2 “Marrakesh Declaration,” *Marrakesh Declaration*, last modified January 27, 2016, <http://www.marrakesh-declaration.org/marrakesh-declaration.html>.



- Call upon the educated, artistic, and creative members of ... society, to establish a broad movement for the just treatment of religious minorities in Muslim countries and to raise awareness as to their rights, and to work together to ensure the success of these efforts.
- Call upon the various religious groups bound by the same national fabric to address their mutual state of selective amnesia that blocks memories of centuries of joint and shared living on the same land [,] ... restoring our shared trust that has been eroded by extremists using acts of terror and aggression;
- Call upon representatives of the various religions, sects and denominations to confront all forms of religious bigotry, vilification, and denigration of what people hold sacred, as well as all speech that promote[s] hatred and bigotry;
- Affirm that it is unconscionable to employ religion for the purpose of aggressing upon the rights of religious minorities in Muslim countries.¹

To read the entire Marrakesh Declaration, go to:
www.marrakeshdeclaration.org

Discussion Questions

1. Had you heard about either the Marrakesh Declaration or the Charter of Medina before? In what context? If you had not heard about these documents before, why do you think that is?
2. What can be done to raise awareness about this important declaration, especially among the Christian community? What is the value of sharing the commonalities between Christians and Muslims?
3. What is the current political or social rhetoric about our Muslim sisters and brothers? What steps are being taken to isolate Muslims? What steps are being taken to invite them to the table?
4. Is there interreligious dialogue within your faith community? What resources are you aware of that can foster this dialogue? What is the role of the leadership within your faith community in reaching out to our Muslim sisters and brothers?
5. Read this short reflection, entitled, “Bundle of Sticks” by Dana Robinson, the chair of the board of trustees of the National Catholic Community Foundation: <http://bit.ly/22nzWRW>. How is the Catholic Church still struggling to bring to life the dialogue encouraged in many Vatican II documents, including *Nostra Aetate*? How can you “bundle your sticks” in solidarity with those who are persecuted for their religion?



¹ “Framework Paper for the Conference,” *Marrakesh Declaration*, last modified January 25, 2016, <http://www.marrakeshdeclaration.org/Files/Booklet-eng.pdf>.

Common Values of Islam and Christianity in Dealing with Others

Islam

Kindness “He does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with anyone who has not fought you for your faith nor driven you out of your homes: God loves the just” (Qur’an, 60:8).

Honor “We have honored the children of Adam and carried them by land and sea; We have provided good sustenance for them and favored them specially above many of those We have created” (Qur’an, 17:70).

Cooperation & Solidarity “Help one another to do what is right and good; do not help one another towards sin and hostility” (Qur’an, 5:2).
 “Do not corrupt the earth after it has been set right” (Qur’an, 7:56).
 “Do not seek to spread corruption in the land, for God does not love those who do this” (Qur’an, 28:77).
 “God knows those who spoil things and those who improve them” (Qur’an, 2:220).

Reconciliation “Make things right between you” (Qur’an, 8:1).

Human Fraternity & Interaction “People, We created you all from a single man and a single woman, and made you into races and tribes so that you should get to know one another. In God’s eyes, the most honored of you are the ones most mindful of Him; God is all-knowing, all-aware” (Qur’an, 49:13).

Christianity

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” (Romans 12:17-18).

“What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas” (Psalm 8:4-8).

“Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear” (Ephesians 4:29).
 “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea” (Mark 9:42).
 “I the Lord test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings” (Jeremiah 17:10).

“So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:23-24).

“For [Jesus Christ] is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Ephesians 2:14)
 “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).



Islam

Christianity

Wisdom “Whoever is given wisdom has truly been given much good, but only those with insight bear this in mind” (Qur’an, 2:269).

“If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you” (James 1:5).

Commonweal “We will not deny those who benefit their rewards” (Qur’an, 7:170).

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

Being Just with Others “God commands justice, doing good, and generosity toward relatives, and He forbids what is shameful, blameworthy, and oppressive. He teaches you so that you may take heed” (Qur’an 16:90).

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8).

Mercy “It was only as a mercy that We sent you (Prophet) to all people” (Qur’an, 21:107).
“My mercy encompasses everything” (Qur’an, 7:156).

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant” (Luke 1:68-72).

“O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever” (Psalm 136:1).

Peace “O you who believe, enter wholeheartedly into submission to God, and do not follow Satan’s footsteps, for he is your sworn enemy” (Qur’an, 2:208).
“But if they incline towards peace, you (Prophet) must also incline towards it” (Qur’an, 8:61).
“O you who believe, fulfill your obligations” (Qur’an, 5:1).
“If they seek help from you against religious persecution, it is your duty to help them, except against people with whom you have a treaty; God sees all that you do” (Qur’an, 8:72).

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

“The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder’s den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:6-9).

