



Rome, April 3rd 2023

Ramadan for Muslims of Europe, a blessed celebration

EULEMA wishes to our Jewish and Christian brothers and sisters for Pesach and Lent!

The majority of **Muslims of Europe** share the roots of the Islamic tradition integrating it in Western society and cultural identity. Many are admittedly non-practising, mainly due to the processes of secularisation that reduce religious sensitivity and ritual practice, but despite this, we must not forget that Muslims in Europe comprise over 5% of the population: over 25 million people and citizens.

Secularisation, immigration, radicalism: each of these terms has a dark side that undermines the value of a civilisation. The aggression of modernity as an artificial emancipation and evolutionary separation from the traditional principles and values of faith, the clandestinity and trafficking of migrants with the exploitation of the desperation of people fleeing from barbarism, chaos or poverty, the ideology of an imperialist polarisation, supremacist exclusivism, pseudo-caliphal perversion or victimist and demagogic claims all betray the authentic role played by political and intellectual debate: these are the dark sides of secularisation, immigration and radicalism. If these dark sides were to cancel out the opportunities that come from a liberal vision, from the circulation of people seeking exchange, help or change, from an integrity of thought capable of updating the noble roots of philosophy, then, indeed, civilisation would be in crisis.

In 2019, the magazine *Civiltà Cattolica* (Catholic Civilization, a important Christian magazine managed by the Jesuits) published an article by Giovanni Sale in which he wrote: “Conceptually, Islamophobia reduces religion to ethnicity, so that the religious element is used as an identity-discriminatory factor, while the actual Islamic presence in Europe is, by its very nature, diverse in ethnic and religious terms. (...) In order to break free from this vicious circle, which is hostile to the acceptance and integration of immigrants, all that remains is to combat the culture that underlies Islamophobia, which can be done in particular by calling upon both public institutions - which have an obligation to promulgate just laws i.e. ones capable of holding together the values of acceptance and those of security - and civil society, including the Church.”

Five years after this wise analysis, the statement by the **Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres** echoed it, as he declared his solidarity with Muslims a few weeks ago in the face of the perverse campaign of hatred that seeks to justify the error of associating certain recent forms of bigotry with a thousand-year spiritual tradition inscribed in Abrahamic monotheism: <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1v/k1v0r1kuof>

In his message, Secretary-General Guterres also mentions the ongoing month of **Ramadan**, which brings together adult Muslims in the practice of daytime fasting for the duration of this lunar month. This year, the two Christian-Catholic and Islamic calendars meet, with the period of **Lent** coinciding with the period of **Ramadan**, and the two great feasts of **Easter 2023** and **Eid al-Fitr 1444** occurring less than two weeks apart. If we also add the concomitance with **Pesach 5783**, the Jewish Passover, the temporal convergence of religious holidays for Jews, Christians and Muslims seems to recall a coincidence with the roots of the tradition of the Abrahamic communities. Fasting and prayer vigils, death and resurrection, liberation and exodus are all common rituals and symbols for Jews, Christians and Muslims in a time that seems to bring together sincere citizens and believers, natives and immigrants, East and West, but also every honest intellectual and responsible politician, in an intelligent and sensitive civilisation, without ever creating confusion.

It would be a great honour for the Muslims of Europe if this year, the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, would take the opportunity to send a message for the celebration of the end of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr 1444, and join in this noble custom of care and civilisation in support of the spiritual inclusion of the Muslim citizens of Europe.

**EULEMA wishes
our Jewish and Christian brothers and sisters
a very blessed Pesach, Lent and Easter!**