

Message of Dom Dirceu Vegini, diocesan bishop of Foz do Iguaçu:

1. The dialogue between Christians and Muslims can easily start from Mary (Vittorio Messoni). That reason for being here, gathered around Mary, the Virgin and Mother of Jesus. We need to learn and welcome the other in his/her difference, to become “we” (Benedictum XVI). Mary gathers Christians and Muslims in their differences because she was defender of life.
2. We want peace in the humanity and among the religions. The violence is contrary to the culture of peace because it dehumanizes. Mary was a strong woman, promoter and defender of life a of the elder as of the unborn child. She first assumed the Pastoral of the Elderly, when visiting Izabel.
3. To honor Mary, on this moment, for us Christians and Muslims, is an excellent opportunity for the fraternal coexistence and a push for peace between the two largest global religions. In this international meeting we praise Mary. We as Christians, as the Mother of God; and the Muslims as mother of the Prophet Jesus. She is the most important woman for the Muslims because she generated the Prophet Jesus.
4. Therefore she is the only woman called by the name in the Sacred Koran – Máryam, considered by the Muslims the most perfect woman, that got pregnant by the power of the divine. In the Koran Mary occupies an entire chapter, quoted as mother of Jesus 34 times in the same book; the prophet Jesus is mentioned 25 times. For us, Christians, the presence of Mary in the Koran context is many times a surprise. Striking similarities. In the Koran, Máryam is praised as “pure”, is called “the one that remained Virgin”; “the one that remained faithful to God”.
5. In the Sacred Bible Mary is quoted some times as being chosen to generate the Son of God She is praised by the Catholics for being a model of faith, love, prayer, servant woman that puts herself on the way, in her maternal sensibility, to manifest solidarity to her cousin Izabel.
6. We are gathered as Christians and Muslims, in this Mary time of praise because no matter the differences, what brought us for this fraternal meeting is the respect, the mutual knowledge, the affective recognition of the dignity of every human person.
7. In this Christian-Muslim International Meeting, when we glorify Mary, example of servant mother for all of us, we wish to renew the compromise to give attentious treatment to the mothers and childreenn in our Country and the world, through Pastoral da Criança, known in many countries, thanks to the work of Dr. Zilda Arns (in memoriam). Saving lives is necessary, mainly the most indefensed like the unnourished children and their mothers, elders, people considered disposable by the excluding society. These people have the suffered face that hurts on us (cf. DA).
8. We want in this meeting that the families know the examples of Mary, servant mother. That in Foz do Iguaçu, headquarter of this meeting, land that God chose to reveal the beauty of nature through the Waterfalls, in the space of Itaipu Binacional where the nature expresses all its strength, that the meeting with the God that we follow, his strength push us always more to the comunion among the religions through the inter-religious dialogue, aiming life, mainly of our children. This is the example that Mary left for us. Hand in hand we will continue building the culture of peace and love.

9. Welcome to the Christian-Muslim International Meeting in Foz do Iguaçu, region blessed by God for a triple frontier, by the wonder that the Creator gave us – the Waterfalls, the second biggest hydroelectric of the world. With Mary, today we proclaim what says the anthem of Foz do Iguaçu: **YES, THOUSAND BLESSINGS I GIVE YOU FOR SO MUCH BEAUTY OH LORD!**