

Message from Olav Fykse Tveit, General secretary of the WCC

2 September 2014

Dear Brother Enzo, Prior of the Community of Bose,
Your Eminences and Graces,
Respected organizers and participants,
Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

It is an honour for me to greet you all on behalf of the fellowship of the World Council of Churches at the occasion of the 22nd International Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox Spirituality. This year's theme, "Blessed are the peacemakers," taken from the introductory beatitudes of the Lord's Sermon on the Mountain, is very timely and inspiring. Not only does it give us a glimpse of hope in a world that is witnessing unbearable manifestations of violence, very often perpetuated in the name of God, but it also reminds us of our weighty responsibility, as Christians, to actively work for justice and peace in our own societies where we live and witness, and also to challenge structures of oppression and injustice in many parts of the world.

The theme of the World Council of Churches' 10th assembly in Busan, South Korea, in November last year, was a prayer to God of life to lead us to justice and peace. We committed ourselves, as a fellowship of churches to walk together on the way of a pilgrimage of justice and peace, overcoming our divisions, our wounds and our weaknesses, healed, reconciled, guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit throughout our journey. On this long way, we learn from each other; and, we support each other, carrying each other's crosses. But on this way, we are not alone as churches and Christians. In fact, our faith in God, Father and Creator of the whole creation, invites us to discover in every human being the image and likeness of God. In our transformative journey, we are called to recognise and join people from other faiths and people of good will in their struggle for justice and peace. We are permanently challenged as Christians to overcome dividing walls of enmity and build bridges of peace among ourselves, and with God's creation.

We are grateful to the Community of Bose for choosing this theme that will continuously resource our pilgrimage of justice and peace. The input of eminent theologians and experts from diverse church traditions and from all over the world will definitely inspire our journey and enrich it. Our long tradition of cooperation and coordination with the Monastic Community of Bose finds once again another precious common ground in our search for unity in diversity.

May our common Lord bless your conference so that it bears fruits of hope, peace and justice for the whole creation.

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
General Secretary