

# Christmas and New Year Greetings



In the Name of God, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.

Assalamu Alaykum; Peace be with you !

During these joyful days I write to you to wish you all a peaceful Christmas Holiday Season commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, Peace be Upon Him.

I pray during these blessed days, which have coincided with the Mawlid , which commemorates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him), that the New Year may bring healing and peace to our suffering world.

Today, the world is facing multiple crises of grave nature. The scourges of terrorism and extremism seem to eat into vitals of our collective ethos and value system. Existence of unsolved international disputes is great danger for stability and global peace and leaves space for extremism and terrorism to grow. The current refugee crisis, of a magnitude not seen since the Second World War, is a test to our humanity.

The dream of global peace will never come true unless followers of both Islam and Christianity, which together make up well over half of the world's population, come forward in a spirit of cooperation, respect and goodwill to play their due role to promote peaceful coexistence.

The hollow notion of 'Clash of Civilizations' needs to be replaced with 'Dialogue among Civilizations' . Enhanced engagement among different religions especially Islam and Christianity would serve to build bridges and demolish walls that separate us.

Islam and Christianity both stand for peace, harmony and human development.

The in-dept account of Jesus Christ (Peace be upon Him) and the Samaritan woman at the well highlights that Jesus Christ (Peace be upon Him) saw the stranger at the well first and foremost as a person and therefore engaged with her and reached out to her. This reflects the true spirit of reaching out and loving the neighbour espoused by Christianity.

The historic incident of Najran whereby the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) treated the Christian delegation as his personal guests, hosted them in His Mosque and allowed them to worship there reflects the true spirit of harmony and brotherhood espoused by Islam.

During this auspicious season , all of us, whatever religion and society we may belong to, must pledge to work for promotion of Peace and Harmony in the world. Love can heal the wounds of decades and we must dedicate ourselves to spread the message of Love of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and Jesus Christ (Peace be upon Him).

We must also foil all conspiracies of blaming religions for actions of terrorism, for all religions promote love and discourage violence.

It is time to build bridges between our communities and start a result oriented dialogue that will prevent clash of civilisations and promote Peace and Integration in western society.

**Shaykh Dr. Umar Al-Qadri**

*Imam Al-Mustafa Islamic Centre Ireland [www.islamiccentre.ie](http://www.islamiccentre.ie)*

*Chair Irish Muslim Peace & Integration Council [www.impic.ie](http://www.impic.ie)*