

STATEMENT OF THE MUSLIM CATHOLIC ALLIANCE ON RECENT EVENTS

With Pope Benedict XVI's apology seen as a positive step toward healing, the members of the Muslim Catholic Alliance feel it is a good time to reiterate our commitment to further the work of religious harmony in the Greater Rochester community. The recent exchange highlights the need for sustained efforts among all religions and especially between the Catholic and Muslim communities to continue to respect differences and to work together based on deeply held and widely shared moral concerns.

Further, we implore our sisters and brothers throughout the world to act in accord with the basic tenet our two faiths: that our God desires us to show love, compassion, forgiveness and mercy toward one another and to mirror God's goodness in our world.

This is a time in which our world is filled with tension and violence. It is a time in which the relationship of Islam and Catholicism is under the media microscope. And so we feel it crucially important to reiterate and re-commit to the pledges we made in the historic Rochester Agreement of Mutual Understanding and Cooperation – the first of its kind in the world signed by a Roman Catholic bishop and leaders of a Muslim community.

To that end, we pledge to our God of Peace and to this community which is so well-known for religious tolerance that we will work tirelessly to achieve better understanding between Muslims and Catholics. We promise to provide educational opportunities to enrich people of both faiths and the deeper knowledge of our history, traditions, beliefs and sensitivities that promotes respect.

In all ways, we will continue to toward what our experience already has taught us: that we must celebrate each other's unique worship of God, celebrate our many similarities and seek to understand our differences.

We know in our hearts that it is only through respectful dialogue that we achieve harmony and friendship, and that the cause of justice and peace are exclusive to no single religion but is the mission of all God's children.

~ The Muslim-Catholic Alliance of the Council of Masajids
and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester
Sept. 21, 2006