



**“Andra tutto bene!”
All will be well!**

Dear Friends,

In just a few short days, the coronavirus outbreak has journeyed from being a hoax to a national emergency of global proportions. We are grateful for the sanity that is finally triumphing over political opportunism and incompetent leadership. As tragic and alarming as this situation is, we must have the courage and presence of mind to realize and appreciate the opportunities we now have as the result of this global catastrophe.

First, nationalism has now proved itself to be not only short-sighted but dangerous. Every Nation on Earth is part of the global family of humankind. Viruses have no national identifications or allegiances. The disease that threatens the well-being of so many does not honor borders, political parties, or religious preferences. Now more than ever, we are becoming more and more aware of how interdependent and interconnected we are as a human family of diverse peoples. This is the time for interfaith practitioners to not only respond to the worldwide threat of a virus with pastoral love but glean the wisdom that is necessary for the survival of the human race.

Second, popularism has also proven itself to be dangerous and destructive. Facts cannot be determined by so-called governmental, religious, and civic leaders who only think in terms of what benefits them. Their followers and supporters forfeit their collective responsibilities to foster truth at the expense of injuring people with their self-serving ideologies. Authentic leaders of any type have a responsibility to the safety and well-being of all peoples everywhere. Interfaith leaders and practitioners have a moral responsibility to challenge those persons and structures that would have us live in isolation from one another as if we had no responsibility for the common good.

Third, we must be aware of those leaders and people who respond to such situations as the current coronavirus threat with uncommon courage and responsibility. Think of the

scientists who endanger their health in the pursuit of a vaccine or cure. Consider the first responders who endanger their lives by coming to the rescue of those infected. Think of the countless people who undergo hardship and personal loss for the sake of their families, children, and friends. We need to be inspired by those who rise to the occasion of helping others no matter the cost or consequence.

Finally, we must be encouraged by the people of Italy who are now posting on the social media and their windows, “Andra tutto bene!” (All will be well!). We must be inspired by the people of China who are posting and singing the Cantonese phrase “jiayou” (Don’t give up). These are two simple examples of the human spirit at its best in times of upset and uncertainty. In the last analysis, we must seek to help not blame, to find courage and not engage in the politics of denial, to care for one another as members of a worldwide human family. Perhaps the time has come for us to realize our solidarity with one another. Social distancing does not imply isolation from one another or abandoning one another. We can embrace with our eyes, touch with our hearts, and bless with our speech. We will cope with this situation together learning anew what it means for us to do together what no one of us can do alone.

Peacefully,
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With the Board of Directors
The Interfaith Peace Project