

**LETTER FROM
HIS MAJESTY KING ABDULLAH II
TO THE NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST
3 FEBRUARY 2011**

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

Mr. President,

My Dear Friends,

The National Prayer Breakfast brings people together each year, not only in fellowship, but in earnest prayer (each to their own faith): that our generation may do God's will on earth. I am honored to join your endeavor, by letter, this morning; as I joined you in person just five years ago.

In all three of the monotheistic faiths, we share the two *greatest* commandments to love God and to love our neighbor. We are thus bound—each and every one of us— by our own faiths to reach out to each other as neighbors with goodwill and mutual respect; we must all help ease each other's suffering and want, and promote justice, peace and harmony.

We are also linked not only by belief but also and more basically by our common humanity. However, it is only by truly understanding the best in our faiths and in our common humanity that we can serve God and protect our children's future. In this vein, Jordan has a long and proud heritage of tolerance and moderation. Today, Jordanians are working systematically and boldly to expand the zone of understanding and dialogue around the world.

We began within our own Islamic community, the world's 1.5 billion Muslims. Six years ago, we issued the Amman Message, which sets forth Islam's call for tolerance, respect, justice, and mercy. The initiative strikes at the roots of extremism by building consensus on three essential points: Who is a Muslim and what constitutes essential Muslim belief? Who has the right to give a *fatwa*, a religious ruling? And does any one have the right to call some one an apostate in Islam?

The Amman Message has been supported by recognized religious scholars throughout the Muslim world. The late Grand Sheikh of Al Azhar, the highest authority in Sunni Islam, called its three points, "The best resource for those who wish to travel along the straight path in their words and their actions, and in their spiritual and religious life."

In 2007, Jordan initiated and supported the launch of the historic "A Common Word" initiative, promoting Muslim-Christian harmony. This open letter, signed by 138 Muslim scholars, was sent to the leaders of Christian Churches around the world. It articulates a platform for peaceful relations between Christians and Muslims, based on the core commandments of our faiths. Speaking at the King Hussein Mosque in Amman in 2009, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI observed that the theme of the Common Word letter was consistent with his first Encyclical: in his words, "the unbreakable bond between love of God and love of neighbor, and the fundamental contradiction of resorting to violence or exclusion in the name of God."

Last year, 2010, Jordan took the message of religious harmony, peace and love to the whole world, to all faiths, and people of no faith. With support from numerous friends, we achieved a unanimous consensus for a U.N. resolution establishing World Interfaith Harmony Week. This will be an annual, voluntary occasion for people of every faith to express their own religious teachings about tolerance, respect for others, and peace.

The World Interfaith Harmony Week will take place all over the world during first week of February each year starting this year, happily coinciding with the Congress Prayer breakfast, now in its 59th year. It is our hope that during this time every year, more and more people will come together, as you are doing today, in growing goodwill and understanding.

Thank-you,

May God's peace and blessings be with you all.