



Vatican City, Aug. 28, 2023.- On Monday, Aug. 28 in Buenos Aires, at the headquarters of the Catholic University of Argentina (UCA), under the patronage of the Pontifical Academy for Life, the "Declaration of the Abrahamic Religions: Elderly persons in contemporary society and their protection" will be signed.

In the presence of Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Pontifical Academy for Life, who is traveling to Chile and Argentina from Aug. 23 to Aug. 30, the Declaration will be signed by Prof. Don Rubén Revello, Director of the Institute of Bioethics of the UCA Faculty of Medicine; Rabbi Prof. Fernando Fishel Szlajen on the Jewish side; and Sheikh Prof. Abdala Cerrilla on the Islamic side.

The President of the Pontifical Academy for Life, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, notes that "the signing of this Declaration is a relevant fact and I am proud that it takes place in the context of the trip I am making to Chile and Argentina. It is important that religions come together, based on their tradition and spiritual heritage, to raise awareness in civil society on the issues of protection and respect for the elderly. Caring for the vulnerable person today is increasingly a sign of civilization, rejecting any temptation to 'discard' the weak and helpless."

Rabbi Prof. Szlajen notes in this regard that "this historic Declaration of the Abrahamic Religions for the Protection and Enhancement of the Elderly is a significant step that demonstrates once again that the core values shared by our respective spiritual traditions are united in the protection and care of our elderly, who deserve deep respect and dignified treatment during this stage of life. Working together, we promote a culture that fosters intergenerational respect and combats the isolation and marginalization of the elderly, who deserve, as an act of justice, to be honored for their wisdom, experience and contribution to society. This Declaration should be a beacon of hope in a world where not only religious differences can be a source of conflict, but especially those caused by ideological and political differences without considering the cross-cutting nature of some common issues. By uniting to protect the elderly, our religious traditions show that compassion and justice transcend differences and have a positive impact on society. In doing so, we not only honor the core principles of our respective faiths, but also build a more compassionate, respectful and just world for present and future generations. As the homiletic Breishit Rabbah 42:3 from the fourth century A.D. says, 'If there are no children there are no students, if there are no students there are no wise men, if there are no wise men there are no elders, if there are no elders there are no prophets, and if there are no prophets God cannot turn His Providence upon them all.'"

Sheikh Prof. Abdala Cerrilla notes that "we Muslims emphasize the importance of this Declaration, as those who profess the Islamic faith recognize the value of the elderly in

society and the great contribution they make to us on a daily basis, given their life wisdom and experience. Islam rewards and encourages the good treatment and dignity of the elderly. This is summed up in the verse of the Holy Qur'an that says, 'Your Lord has ordained that they worship Him alone and honor their parents. If one or both of them reach old age, do not despise them, but speak kind words to them...'. Holy Qur'an (17:23)."

Prof. Fr. Rubén Revello notes that "the Holy Father has given several Catecheses on Third Age. The Pontifical Academy for Life has been working for many years on the issue of palliative care, and Archbishop Paglia has successfully presented a project for the protection of the Third Age in Italy. This set of circumstances led us to plan the current visit of Archbishop Paglia. In Argentina, in particular, this visit will have a pastoral emphasis, with a meeting at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina for those involved in the pastoral care of health and the elderly; a more academic aspect, with a meeting between various private and state universities and a conference at the National Academy of Medicine; and a more political aspect, with meetings with the government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and at the nation's Senate. With this effort, we intend to raise awareness particularly among those who make public policy decisions, and create opinion in favor of respecting and protecting the weakest and most fragile in society."

Attached: Spanish text and English translation of the Declaration.

Place and time: August 28 - 5 p.m. Buenos Aires time (10 p.m. in Italy). Aula Magna Cardenal Pironio (Edificio San José, Av. Alicia M. de Justo 1600 - CABA)

Vatican City, August 28, 2023