

Press Statement of Mumbai Parliament of Religions

18th September, 2024

The Mumbai Parliament of Religions was organized jointly by Ramakrishna Math and Mission and Inter-Religious Solidarity Council in Mumbai on 18th September, 2024 at Ramakrishna Mission, Mumbai to commemorate the iconic address of Swami Vivekananda at Chicago in 1893. The Parliament resolved to promote the message of Swami Vivekananda of acceptance in society and foster mutual respect for all religions for better communal harmony in India. *“I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true”*, recalled Swami Devakantyananda, assistant secretary of Ramakrishna Mission from the iconic speech of Swami Vivekananda delivered at Chicago at the World Parliament of Religions in 1893. The Mumbai Parliament of Religions apart of seeing addresses of religious leaders including Swami Devakantyananda from Hinduism, Maulana Mohammad Fayyaz Baqir Khan, and Fr. Gilbert Delima, Rector of St. Pius College, Goregaon, started with the religious leaders distributing fruits to the patients of Ramakrishna Mission hospital. The Parliament was attended by over 200 participants from cross sections of society and different religious communities.

Echoing the message of Swami Devkantyananda, Maulana Baqir asserted that no religion including Islam teach violence and hatred and in fact all religions give the central message of love and acceptance. Fr. Gilbert Delima taking from the message of Swami Vivekananda reminded that one has to imbibe the spirit of all religions and yet not lose individuality. All religions are equal and none are inferior or superior. The Parliament of Religions had representations from other religious traditions- Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Bahai faith and Zoroastrianism. They gave their messages of solidarity with other faiths. The IRSC in the past two years have been undertaking activities to provide a common platform to leaders to different religious traditions and fostering communal harmony and inclusion.

The event underscored the importance of inclusion and religious tolerance, aligning with Swami Vivekananda’s vision of unity among religions. As Vivekananda famously stated, *“As the different streams having their sources in different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.”* This sentiment was at the heart of the Parliament, highlighting the shared values that bridge different faiths.