

EDITORIAL

In the context of his time, Ramon Llull was a tolerant man. Instead of siding with those who supported the use of arms to impose their beliefs, he relied on the strength of reason. He devoted his whole life to peaceful relations between the great religions of the Mediterranean. This remembrance of Ramon Llull takes on a special meaning in the international year for tolerance. Unfortunately, in today's world, one also sees political ideologies and doctrines that are characterized by intolerance. In December 1994 UNESCO convened a meeting of religious leaders in Barcelona to study in what way religions could become factors of tolerance and peace. The text approved by the representatives of the great religious traditions repudiates those who would justify violence and intolerance in the name of religion. Thousands of religious communities of all confessions have supported the Barcelona declaration. On a local level, I must mention two examples that reflect the Catalans' feelings in favour of tolerance. First of all, the extent of the acts of solidarity with Bosnia. On 21 July, a large civic demonstration headed by Jordi Pujol, President of the Catalan Government, Joaquim Xicoy, president of the Catalan Parliament, and Pasqual Maragall, Mayor of Barcelona, filled the streets of the Catalan capital to demand peace for Bosnia based on respect for cultural and religious diversity. Secondly, the campaign which, promoted by the Catalan government and a series of Non-Governmental Organisations, has issued schools with a collection of educational material on tolerance and the great festival for civility and tolerance held at the Olympic Stadium in Barcelona on 30 September 1995, with the participation of the famous theatre group Els Comediants, Lluís Llach, the singer who best represents the Catalan-speaking area, and the rock group Elèctrica Dharma. Ever since Llull's days, tolerance has been an essential option in the life of Catalonia and in international coexistence.

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