

VATICAN

Abrahamic Family House in Abu Dhabi to open in 2022

The cultural landmark in the UAE capital, which includes a synagogue, a church and a mosque, is meant to be a beacon of understanding and peaceful coexistence, inspired by the Document on Human Fraternity.

By Robin Gomes

The Abrahamic Family House, which encloses a synagogue, a church and a mosque in a single complex, and which is scheduled to be inaugurated in 2022, is 20 percent complete, the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity (HCHF) said in a statement on Tuesday. The Committee, which is also supervising the project, said it is inspired by the 2019 **Document on Human Fraternity**. Constructed on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, the project is closely followed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam Ahmed el-Tayeb of al-Azhar, who endorsed the design, the HCHF said.

The Abrahamic Family House derives its name from the Old Testament biblical figure, Abraham, who is recognized and greatly revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Shared values

The Abrahamic Family House's design, by architect Sir David Adjaye, captures the values shared by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, through three main buildings, including a mosque, a church, and a synagogue in one place. "As such, the complex innovatively recounts the history and builds bridges between human civilizations and heavenly messages."



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Meet the architect for the Abrahamic Family House

The names of the three separate iconic houses of worship in the Abrahamic Family House complex are officially unveiled as “Imam AlTayeb Mosque,” “St. Francis Church,” and “Moses Ben Maimon Synagogue”. Moses ben Maimon was a prolific and influential Sephardic Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages.

Interfaith harmonious coexistence

Besides the 3 places of worship, the site includes a cultural center that aims to encourage people to exemplify human fraternity and solidarity within a community that cherishes the values of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence, while the unique character of each faith is preserved.



The design of the Abrahamic Family House was first unveiled by Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, at a global gathering in New York in 2019, during the 2nd meeting of the HCHF. It said the design was also presented to Pope Francis and the Grand Imam during a meeting with them in November that year.



26/08/2019

Pope welcomes new UAE committee to promote Human Fraternity

03/02/2020

1st anniversary of Document on Human Fraternity

"The Abrahamic Family House epitomizes interfaith harmonious coexistence and preserves the unique character of each religion," said Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Department of Culture Abu Dhabi and an HCHF member. He said, "It personifies Abu Dhabi's vision for human **fraternity** (*the state or feeling of friendship and mutual support within a group.*) and embeds coexistence into the already diverse cultural fabric of the UAE. Overseeing the development of this iconic project is inspiring and reflective of the UAE efforts in realizing the values of the Document on Human Fraternity and fostering its lofty principles."

The Document on Human Fraternity

He explained that the names of the three houses of worship recognize the work of the Grand Imam, Pope Francis and Moses Ben Maimon, and "harnesses

their teachings to forge a message of goodwill for future generations around the world".

The "Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together", simply called the Document on Human Fraternity, was signed on February 4, 2019, by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam during the Pope's visit to Abu Dhabi.

Cultural landmark

In the spirit of this Document, the Abrahamic Family House complex will welcome all visitors wishing to worship, learn and engage in dialogue. In addition, it will offer a variety of daily programmes and activities and will host international conferences and world summits that feature harmonious coexistence within communities. "As a place for learning, dialogue and worship," the HCHF said, "the Abrahamic Family House will be a cultural landmark and an inspiring global symbol that epitomizes the shared values of harmonious coexistence and understanding among the three Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam."

The iconic geometric architecture of three cubes, representing the separate places of worship, evokes the unified commonality and mutual coexistence between the three religions. At the same time, the design reflects traditional architecture while retaining the individual traits of each of the three faiths.

The supervisors of the project said that during the design phases of the houses of worship, members of religious communities worldwide have been engaged and consulted to ensure consistency with and adherence to the respective religion's requirements and teachings.

On completion, the complex of the Abrahamic Family House will offer the followers of the respective faiths enough spaces for "real peace of mind and soul within an atmosphere in which a spirit of intimacy prevails". The HCHF said, "Each aspect of the design is brought to life through the architectural features and unique constructional details of the facades, the external and internal views, the columns, and the windows and vaults that reflect the unique characteristics of each of the three Abrahamic faiths."