

Multi-faith complex to rise where pope and imam signed agreement



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The Abrahamic Family House is first concrete sign of cooperation based on 2019 meeting.

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Discussions between the leader of the Catholic Church and one of the highest authorities in the Islamic world led to the signing of the “Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together” on February 4, 2019. **In that document, Pope Francis and Grand Imam of al-Azhar Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed El-Tayeb affirmed the relationship between authentic religious teachings and peace and called for greater cooperation among faiths.**

From the signing of the document emerged the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, which bills itself as a “diverse set of international religious leaders, educational scholars and cultural leaders who were inspired by the Document on Human Fraternity, and are dedicated to sharing its message of mutual understanding and peace.”

The first concrete result of the committee's work is underway in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, where Francis and El-Tayeb signed the document.

Ground was to be broken this year on the Abrahamic Family House, a complex that includes a Christian church, Muslim mosque, and Jewish synagogue.

The three faiths see Abraham as a common patriarch.

Ghanaian-British architect David Adjaye, known for the National Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall in Washington, won the competition

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to design the three houses of worship in the Abrahamic Family House.

Symbolically, the church, synagogue and mosque will share the same foundation.

Adjaye told Vatican News that the project will represent a new typology of world architecture. **“There has never been a building which houses the three faiths in one form,” he said.** He wanted to preserve “the unique experience of each of the faiths” while at the same time “connecting them all with one device.”

Connecting the three houses of worship will be a garden — an image that has important significance in each of the world’s three major religions. “Each of the houses of worship can be peered into from the vantage point of the raised garden, which will house an educational center,” [Vatican News](#) said. “The three worship spaces have the same dimensions but orient in the direction and contain structural elements inherited within each specific faith tradition.”

Thus, the church’s altar will point east, the synagogue’s podium and Torah scrolls will be oriented towards Jerusalem, and the mosque will be directed towards the Kaaba in Mecca, according to [Euronews](#).

“We also realized that in each of the faiths there had been very unique details,” he said. **“The domes, vaults and arches of mosques, ideas of enclosure in Jewish tradition and the idea of deliverance and ecstasy in Christian churches, for example.** So, they became the details that started to be amplified.”

The complex is not envisioned to stand simply as a monument to high ideals, but will be used by active congregations. There is a native Muslim population, since the UAE is part of the Arabian peninsula, but there has also been a “huge influx of migrant workers” which means “there are hundreds of thousands of Christians — largely Catholics — as well as members of other religions, including an active Jewish community that numbers about 3,000,” [Religion News Service](#) reported.

Abrahamic Family House Animation Adjaye Associates



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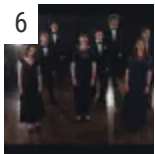
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