

Prague, 27 May 2014

Dear Friends,

We send greetings to your assembly in Warsaw, another European city that has its Garden of the Righteous. It is our hope that one day there will be a garden like this in Prague as well.

We have a profound respect for the figures whose memories you are recalling. We welcome the fact that they include names that Václav Havel knew intimately: Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Marek Edelman, and Anna Politkovskaya. These are figures who have in common resolute civic convictions, moral integrity, the fact that they put the common interest above private interests, and above all their respect for the uniqueness of the human being and human dignity.

Václav Havel said to the Canadian Parliament in 1999, *“I have often asked myself why in fact people have the right to certain rights. And I always came to the conclusion that human rights, human freedom, and human dignity have their deepest roots somewhere else than in this everyday world of ours. They only become what they are because under certain circumstances human beings – without being forced into this by anyone – regard them as higher values than their own lives. That is why they only make sense against a background of infinity and eternity.”* We are convinced that the sacrifices made by those you are honouring in order to promote human rights and civil liberties fulfil this meaning.

The Václav Havel Library is currently installing public memorial sites dedicated to Václav Havel in various major cities throughout the world. They take the form of two metal chairs where people can sit down, talk together, reflect and meditate. They are called Václav Havel’s Place. What is worth noting about them is that the artist, Bořek Šípek, designed these chairs in such a way that they fit round a tree. We thus feel there is a profound spiritual symbolism and a connection with the idea of the Garden of the Righteous, which you are spreading today.

On behalf of the Václav Havel Library,

Marta Smolíková
Director