



EDITORIAL

Over the past month, Muslims in Australia and around the world have been observing the month of Ramadan by fasting from dawn to sunset and by extra devotional prayers and Quran recitation. At the *Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations* we have been privileged to participate in *iftar* meals, in private homes and in public venues, joining in the feasting at the end of the day and enjoying Muslim hospitality.

We have also joined in spirit by praying for Muslims at this time, that through their fasting and religious devotion they may find grace and favour with God.

We take this opportunity to say **عيد مبارك** (*‘Eid Mubarak!*) to all our Muslim readers. We wish you every blessing and happiness as you celebrate *‘Eid al-Fitr*, the feast marking the end of Ramadan.

We are also share with all our readers the message from the *Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue* for the end of Ramadan, which invites Christians and Muslims to collaborate together in overcoming violence in our world (p. 3).

We introduce our latest publication, Professor John Esposito's ***Ten Things Everyone Needs to Know About Islam*** (see insert). This handy 29 page summary of basic information about Islam and Muslims is by one of the leading scholars of Islam in the English-speaking world. It has been endorsed by scholars, teachers, university professors, interfaith activists and religious leaders in Australia, both Muslim and Christian. I hope that every teacher, student, community worker, pastoral worker and religious leader will buy this book to learn the basics about Islam and Muslims. In our globalized world we can no longer afford to be

ignorant about our Muslim neighbours who make up over twenty percent of the world's population.

As I was writing this I received a forwarded e-mail depicting violence purportedly carried out by some Muslim extremists, concluding we do not want "them" in "our" country. In fact, the protagonists were not Muslims at all! Such sensationalist and emotional mis-representation fuels ignorance and suspicion and must be countered by accurate information. For this reason the dissemination of *Ten Things* far and wide is all the more timely and urgent.

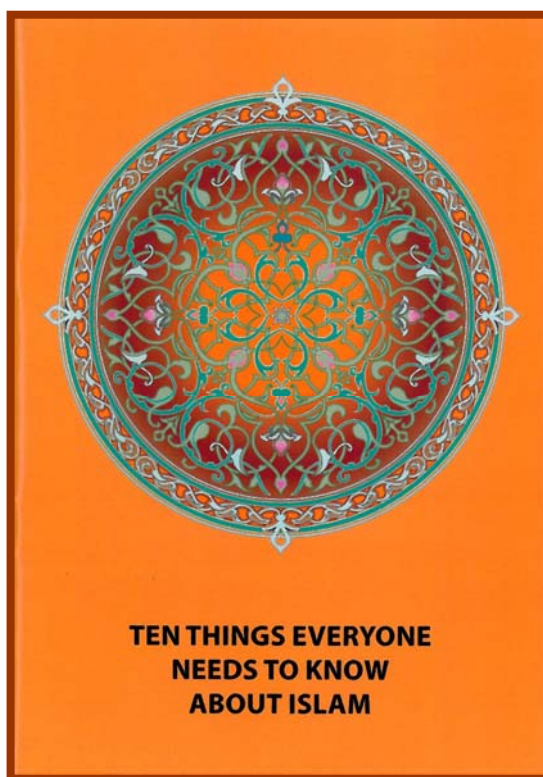
As an example of cultivating informed discussion, our feature centre-spread (pp. 4-5) addresses the perennial issue of the veiling of Muslim women, currently made hotter by legislation in Europe to ban the *burka/niqab*. Similar legislation has been proposed in Australia. To defuse the emotionalism surrounding this topic and make

clear, rational discussion possible, we provide images and information about the different types of veils so that we can all know exactly what the proposed legislation is aimed at and what is not within its scope.

In the rest of the issue you will also find our usual news from the Centre, items of interest from around the world and coming events.

As Spring blossoms around us we hope that we will all experience new life, especially in the area of Christian-Muslim Relations.

Patrick J McInerney
Editor



TEN THINGS EVERYONE
NEEDS TO KNOW
ABOUT ISLAM

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Amal Dardass and her husband Maurice Doumit on the birth of their baby boy on the 24 August. Amal worked at the Centre in early 2010.

Public Talks

On 21 May **Fr Patrick McNerney** gave a formal presentation on Islam to the residents of Southern Cross Village, Marsfield NSW. He introduced them to the basics of the religion and showed commonalities and differences. The presentation was very well received.

The following day **Fr Patrick McNerney** gave the keynote address at the annual Pentecost Vigil at Carseldyne, Queensland. Given the festal occasion, he presented an address entitled "*Transforming Relationships through the Holy Spirit*". He stressed the importance of building better relations between Christians and Muslims in today's world, setting it in the context of the change in the church's attitude towards other religions, particularly at Vatican II and in the subsequent years. He concluded with an appeal to be open to the surprise of the Spirit who is alive and active in all peoples, cultures and religions.

8th Abrahamic Conference

The Abrahamic Conference, a joint venture of *Affinity Intercultural Foundation*, the *Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney*, the *Columban Mission Institute*, the *NSW Jewish Board of Deputies* and the *Uniting Church Synod of NSW/ACT* was held at Mary McKillop Place on Sunday 1 August. The theme was *Abrahamic Faiths: Contribution to Society and Relevance Today*. The keynote address was given by Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence, Chief Rabbi of the Great Synagogue in Sydney, and the respondents were Professor Neil Ormerod from the Australian Catholic University and Dr Salih Yucel from Monash University. The talks were followed by shared refreshments, table discussion and Q and A with the panel of speakers. The focus, attention and engagement of all ensured a very successful and meaningful conference for all the participants. A full report with photos and access to the papers can be found on the *Affinity Intercultural Foundation* website at

<http://www.affinity.org.au/index.php/news-and-media-releases/151-the-8th-abrahamic-conference-2010.html>.

Interreligious Dialogue at the Catholic Institute

Fr Patrick McNerney, assisted by **Fr Brian Vale**, is currently teaching a twelve week tertiary level course on Interreligious Dialogue at the *Catholic Institute of Sydney*.

Mini-Parliament of the Worlds Religions

As part of the dialogue course, on 25 August there was a *Mini-Parliament of the Worlds Religions*. Representatives from eight different religions/spiritualities—Aboriginal, Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jew, Muslim and Sikh—were invited to form a panel. Each presented interreligious dialogue from his or her own religion's perspective. Fr Patrick then engaged them in dialogue. Finally, there was an open forum with the audience, much like "Q&A" on the ABC! The evening concluded with refreshments. The formal and social gathering was a rich experience of camaraderie across religious diversity and a model of interreligious dialogue. Many thanks to the *Catholic Institute* and its Student Association and the *Columban Mission Institute* for co-hosting this event.

Melkite Eparchy

The Centre enjoys good relations with the Melkite Catholic Eparchy. On 17 July **Frs Patrick McNerney** and **Brian Vale** gave a presentation on the Catholic Church at a *Youth Interfaith* arranged by the Melkite Welfare Association at Greenacre, NSW.

On 4 August the *Columban Mission Institute* hosted Bishop Darwish, Frank Chahoud and Maha Tayar from the *Melkite Welfare Association* for a visit and morning tea. We showed our visitors the work of each of our four Centres. In the Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations we discussed how to develop and improve the interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims. The Melkite guests bring to the discussion their long historical experience of living with Muslims as well as their shared linguistic and cultural heritage of the Arabic speaking world in the Middle East and also in Australia.

Bishop Darwish and **Fr Patrick McNerney** are also both members of the *Australian Catholic Council for Ecumenism and Interreligious Relations* which advises the Bishops Commission.

Ramadan Hospitality

As this newsletter is being prepared Muslims around the world are observing the fast of Ramadan. We pray that through their religious devotion shown through the discipline of fasting God may grant them grace and favour. It has now become custom that Muslims invite Christians to join them for *iftar*, the breaking of the fast at the end of the day. **Frs Patrick McNerney, Brian Vale** and **Reg Howard** have been privileged to be guests at Muslim homes during this time. We were also guests at the *Affinity Friendship and Dialogue Iftar Dinner* held at NSW Parliament House on 2 September.



**PONTIFICAL COUNCIL
FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

***Christians and Muslims
Together in overcoming violence among followers of different religions***

MESSAGE FOR THE END OF RAMADAN

`Id al-Fitr 1431 H. / 2010 A.D.

Dear Muslim Friends,

1. *`Id Al-Fitr*, which concludes Ramadan, presents, once again, a favorable occasion to convey to you the heartfelt wishes of serenity and joy on behalf of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

Throughout this month, you have committed yourselves to prayer, fasting, helping the neediest and strengthening relations of family and friendship. God will not fail to reward these efforts!

2. I am delighted to note that believers of other religions, especially Christians, are spiritually close to you during these days, as is testified by the various friendly meetings which often lead to exchanges of a religious nature. It is pleasing to me also to think that this Message could be a positive contribution to your reflections.

3. The theme proposed this year by the Pontifical Council, *Christians and Muslims: Together in overcoming violence among followers of different religions*, is, unfortunately, a pressing subject, at least in certain areas of the world. The Joint Committee for Dialogue instituted by the Pontifical Council and al-Azhar Permanent Committee for Dialogue among the Monotheistic Religions had also chosen this topic as a subject of study, reflection and exchange during its last annual meeting (Cairo, 23 - February 24, 2010). Permit me to share with you some of the conclusions published at the end of this meeting.

4. There are many causes for violence among believers of different religious traditions, including: manipulation of the religion for political or other ends; discrimination based on ethnicity or religious identity; divisions and social tensions. Ignorance, poverty, underdevelopment are also direct or indirect sources of violence among as well as within religious communities. May the civil and religious authorities offer their contributions in order to remedy so many situations for the sake of the common good of all society! May the civil authorities safeguard the primacy of the law by ensuring true justice to put a stop to the authors and promoters of violence!

5. There are also important recommendations given in the above mentioned text: to open our hearts to mutual forgiveness and reconciliation for a peaceful and fruitful coexistence; to recognize what we have in common and to respect differences, as a basis for a culture of dialogue; to recognize and respect the dignity and the rights of each human being without any bias related to ethnicity or religious affiliation; necessity to promulgate just laws which guarantee the fundamental equality of all; to recall the importance of education towards respect, dialogue and fraternity in the various educational arenas: at home, in the school, in churches and mosques. Thus we will be able to oppose violence among followers of different religions and promote peace and harmony among the various religious communities. Teaching by religious leaders, as well as school books which present religions in an objective way, have, along with teaching in general, a decisive impact on the education and the formation of younger generations.

6. I hope that these considerations, as well as the responses which they elicit within your communities, and with your Christian friends, will contribute to the continuation of a dialogue, growing in respect and serenity, upon which I call the blessings of God!

Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran
Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran
President

Pier Luigi Celata
Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata
Secretary

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIJAB, NIQAB AND BURKA?

Hijab



The word *hijab* comes from the Arabic for veil and is used to describe the headscarves worn by Muslim women. These scarves come in myriad styles and colours. The type most commonly worn in the West is a square scarf that covers the head and neck but leaves the face clear.

Niqab



The *niqab* is a veil for the face that leaves the area around the eyes clear. However, it may be worn with a separate eye veil. It is worn with an accompanying headscarf.

Burka



The *burka* is the most concealing of all Islamic veils. It covers the entire face and body, leaving just a mesh screen to see through.

Al-Amira



The *al-amira* is a two-piece veil. It consists of a close fitting cap, usually made from cotton or polyester, and an accompanying tube-like scarf.

Shayla



The *shayla* is a long, rectangular scarf popular in the Gulf region. It is wrapped around the head and tucked or pinned in place at the shoulders.

Khimar



The *khimar* is a long, cape-like veil that hangs down to just above the waist. It covers the hair, neck and shoulders completely, but leaves the face clear.

Chador



The *chador*, worn by many Iranian women when outside the house, is a full-body cloak. It is often accompanied by a smaller headscarf underneath.

The veiling of Muslim women is a “hot topic” because of legislation to ban the *burka* in some European countries. In NSW a Private Member’s Bill has been proposed to prohibit people wearing full-face coverings in public places. In Western Australia a judge ordered a Muslim woman not to wear a *niqab* when giving testimony in court – to which the Muslim witness readily consented.

To defuse the emotionalism around this issue, we wanted to show exactly what is being talked about so that there can be an informed and rational conversation. Hence the pictures and explanation of various types of Muslim veiling on the facing page.

Firstly, there is objection only to the *burka* and to the *niqab* in public fora where identity and security are issues. There is no objection to the other forms of veiling that do not obscure the face.

Secondly, the *burka* and *niqab* are worn only by a very tiny minority of Muslim women who interpret the Quran (e.g. 24:31, 33:59-60) quite literally. Most interpret these texts simply to enjoin modesty so are satisfied with one of the lesser forms of veiling—if any at all—as any modest form of dress fulfils the obligation. Note also that Quran 24:30 obligates men using exactly the same language, yet does not generate the same controversy!

Thirdly, modesty is interpreted differently in different climates, societies, cultures and situations —what is appropriate at the beach is not appropriate at home, and what is appropriate at home is not appropriate at work.

Fourthly, the other forms of veiling are very similar to the way the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, is often depicted in Christian art. Of course, this too reflects the society and mores of the artist, or of how the artist conceived first century Jewish society, rather than any strictly religious legal requirement, as some suggest.

Fifthly, the artists are possibly not far wrong in their depiction as this style of head covering is still part of the culture and national costume of traditional societies in many countries today.

Sixthly, the other forms are like the veil that not too long ago was once part of the religious habit of nearly all Catholic nuns and is still worn by sisters in some religious orders today.

Finally, the other forms of veiling are very similar to the “hoody” that is so popular with many young people today—and there is no similar attempt to ban them!

Fr Patrick McInerney

For further comment and resources see *The Islamic Veil, Secularism and Freedom of Religion*
<http://peacepalacelibrary-weekly.blogspot.com/2010/07/islamic-veil-secularism-and-freedom-of.html>

France's decision to ban the wearing of the burka in public by law symbolises the difficulty of reconciling rights when they conflict. This lies at the heart of the dilemma of multicultural societies and applies not just to France but to Great Britain and elsewhere. They do not wish to be culturally imperialist by treating ethnic minorities with disrespect, but nor do they want to set aside their own core values, such as opposition to the exploitation and abuse of women. A society like Britain which insists that girls from very conservative Muslim families should nevertheless be sent to school to receive a good education has already taken sides in that debate. The real issue is about proportionality.

Not many French Muslim women wear the full body and face veil with just a slit for the eyes. The number has been put as low as 2,000, mainly in Paris, and a substantial number of them, it is said, are converts to Islam. That suggests that, in some cases at least, the burka is a conscious choice. Advocates of the burka claim it is required by Islam, a fact visibly disputed by the vast majority of Muslim women who wear, for the sake of female modesty, a headscarf if they choose to cover their head at all. Critics of the burka say it represents an extreme demonstration of the control of women by men, who make them hide their appearance, their identity and almost their very existence from strangers. That is very depersonalising. Part of the critics' concern is about the growth of a fundamentalist reading of Islam, of which the burka is a symptom. That is taken to be a threat to French values, not just the civic doctrine of *laïcité* but to *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité* – the very mottos of the Republic.

Perhaps the outside world should hesitate to sit in judgement on the French in such matters, for the balance of forces needed to uphold social cohesion are very different from one society to the next. Sufficient to say that a legal ban on a certain mode of dress, whatever it signifies, would not strike the British as justified except in rare circumstances, for instance where identity needs to be established for security purposes. Public opinion was starting to resist a range of measures introduced by the last Labour Government, doubtless all well intentioned, which began to amount to an irksome attempt on the part of the state to control how individual citizens lived their lives. The incoming coalition has read the runes correctly and is starting to turn back these incursions into personal freedom, some petty but some more serious, by the state. The British would not tolerate something as dirigiste as a state-imposed dress code, even though many British people would personally deplore the suppression of female identity that the burka seems to signify. It is by education and cultural influence that the values of Western civilisation will prevail in the end, and anything that divides or antagonises minority communities is unhelpful.

The Tablet, Editorial, 17 July 2010
<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/article/14976>

Pope Benedict XVI: Dialogue Key to Peace

Pope Benedict XVI explained to the small Catholic community in Nicosia, Cyprus, that interreligious dialogue is a necessary element for lasting peace as it promotes trust and harmony among peoples of various religions, cultures and nations.

He said: "Only by patient work can mutual trust be built, the burden of history overcome, and the political and cultural differences between peoples become a motive to work for deeper understanding ... I urge you to help create such mutual trust between Christians and non-Christians as a basis for building lasting peace and harmony between peoples of different religions, political regions and cultural backgrounds."

For the full article see *Zenit*:

<http://www.zenit.org/article-29493?l=english>

Pope Benedict XVI: Appeal for Pakistan

Pope Benedict XVI made an appeal for solidarity with the flood-ravaged nation of Pakistan.

Pakistan saw its most devastating monsoon rainy season in decades, which caused flooding that brought as many as 2,000 deaths and affected another 20 million people. The Pope said: "May these brothers [and sisters] of ours, so harshly tested, not lack our solidarity and the concrete aid of international solidarity."

For full article see *Zenit*:

<http://www.zenit.org/article-30088?l=english>

Australian Muslims Become Mainstream!

Usman Khawaja, 23, moved closer to becoming Australia's first Muslim Test cricketer in June when he was selected in the squad to play against the nation of his birth, Pakistan. Khawaja has regarded Australia as home from the moment his father, Tariq, an information technology professional from Islamabad, moved the family to Sydney two decades ago.

For the first time, Australians have also elected a Muslim member of Federal Parliament. Ed Husic is the new Labor member for the western Sydney seat of Chifley. He is the son of Bosnian immigrants and the national president of the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union of Australia.

For more details on the Muslim sportsman and the Muslim politician see the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

<http://www.smh.com.au/sport/cricket/accomplished-calm-elegant--and-a-muslim-in-test-squad-20100622-yvsw.html>

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-election/firsttimers-break-the-mould-20100822-13az3.html>

An Interview with Dr Sakena Yacoobi

Dr Sakena Yacoobi founded the *Afghan Institute of Learning* in 1995 which, in defiance of the Taliban, educates 3,000 women and girls every year and has reached over one million people. Her story is an encouraging insight into one Muslim woman's bold stance for women and women's education in Afghanistan. She was interviewed by the *Council for a Parliament of the Worlds Religions*.

She said: "The best way to provide education is to provide teacher training, because if you have a good teacher in the classroom, you keep students ... The best way to keep them engaged is to keep them challenged. Once you provide critical thinking, then you can transform individuals, because they can ask questions and they can have a sustainable life; they can begin to feel confidence. I started working in areas of education and health in the refugee camps during the Taliban. And it's a great opportunity for me. I can see it has had a great impact on the people, because, day to day, I can see that people are changing ... It has taken a long time and it will take time. In the 20 years I've worked in this area, I can see a difference."

For the full interview see the CPWR website:

http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/news/index.php/2010/07/courage-meets-compassion-an-interview-with-sakena-yacoobi/?utm_source=Parliament+Newsletter&utm_campaign=52b5156352-Newsletter+Beta+5&utm_medium=email

Prayer and Protest at Ground Zero

New York's mayor, Michael Bloomberg, urges that there should be no intervention that would link the state and religion. Bloomberg, himself a Jew, said: "I've always believed that the Government should not be involved in deciding who you pray to, what you say, or where you say it."

"We would betray our values—and play into our enemies' hands—if we were to treat Muslims differently than anyone else. In fact, to cave in to popular sentiment would be to hand a victory to the terrorists - and we should not stand for that. For that reason, I believe that this is as important a test of the separation of Church and State as we may see in our lifetime, and it is critically important that we get it right."

For full article see *The Tablet*:

<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/article/15135>

Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York also underlines the need for civil, respectful dialogue. For details of his press conference see *Zenit*:

<http://www.zenit.org/article-30100?l=english>

For other comments see *Catholic News Service*:

<http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1003555.htm>

In a recent visit to Turkey I was privileged to witness a "Whirling Dervishes" ceremony at a thirteenth century caravanserai in Saruhan, Cappadocia. Caravanserais are large fortified buildings which were once common safe resting places along the Silk Road and other routes. As darkness fell before the ceremony I found myself waiting in the dimly lit courtyard of the building by a small fountain. My imagination had me going back to a time when there would have been camels and horses all around me and a lot more noise than on that still night.

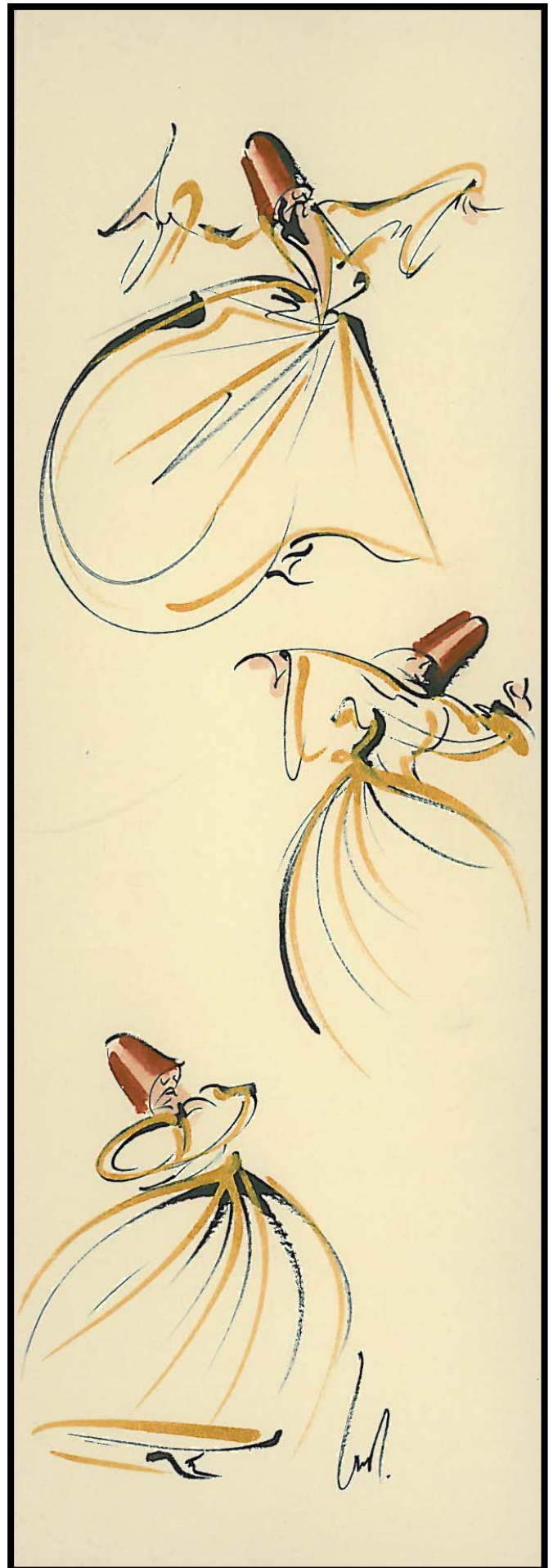
The ceremony (*sema*) began slowly in an inner room with the quiet, unostentatious procession of the dancers and musicians on to the darkened dance floor area and their taking their initial positions seated on the floor. The formal ceremony itself consisted of several parts including prayer in which the dancers ultimately aim to represent a mystical journey of human spiritual ascent through love, relinquishing their ego, in order to find truth and unity with God.

The Sufi philosophy behind the ceremony is that the fundamental condition of all existence down to the tiniest atom is one of revolving in space. The whirling dervishes or *Semazen* engage their minds to participate in this mostly unconscious revolution of all beings. They aim to discern the "universal movement" of creation as they raise their hands upwards and start to turn around on their own axis. As they begin to whirl each dancer has one hand facing upwards to receive God's love and the other hand facing down to return this love to the world.

The almost mournful like music of the reed flute (*ney*) reminded me of the plaintive tone of the Japanese shakuhachi and it signifies breathing the Divine Breath of the Spirit into the universe. I sensed a strong Asian flavour in the initial ritual salutes or bowing, in the formal way in which the outer cloaks were removed, and in the respectful tone of the well practised rituals. The leader did not participate in the whirling but monitored the movements and skilfully stepped between the dancers at the appropriate times. There was a slow respectful rhythm in the structure of the *sema* and I reflected on the significance of often unnoticed rituals in our lives. Our world today seems to value a much more instant and fast moving pace of life. The dancers aim to achieve an emotional ecstasy in an overflow of religious feeling but the pattern of the steps themselves struck me as well practised and very much part of a ritual.

The founder of this mystic Sufi order popularly known as "Whirling Dervishes" was the revered poet Mawlana Jalaladdin Muhammad Rumi. It is said he heard a friend hammering gold in his jewellery shop and heard the word Allah in the rhythmic sound and it inspired him into a state of ecstasy which resulted in his *sema* or whirling. For Rumi the rapture and attraction of all existence is due to the hidden attraction to the Divine. Although Rumi died 800 years ago his poetry still inspires contemplatives throughout the world to contemplate the creation of the universe and to desert their false self and all illusion on their journey to perfection and unity with God.

Fr Brian Vale



COMING EVENTS

Gallipoli Mosque Open Day. Sunday, 19 September from 10:00 am to 4.00 pm at 15-19, Gelibolu Pde, Auburn, NSW, 2144: see Ottoman artwork, tour the mosque, information seminars, meet members of the Muslim community, refreshments and light lunch. For details see <http://www.gallipolimosque.org.au/>

Interfaith International Day of Peace Service, Tuesday 21 September at St David's Uniting Church Hall, 454 Pacific Highway, Lindfield (cnr. Pacific Hwy & Provincial Road)

Other Ways: Growing Alternatives to Violence, Friday, 24 September, at Santa Sabina College, Strathfield, 1.00 pm to 9.00 pm: share your experiences, celebrate achievements, learn together and build networks for the future at this event to mark the end of the Decade to Overcome Violence. For further details see <http://www.assembly.uca.org.au/rof/upcoming-events/181-other-ways-growing-alternatives-to-violence-24-september-2010-sydney>

Multicultural Eid Festival and Fair (MEFF) Sunday, 26 September, Fairfield Showground. Over 30,000 people from 35 communities; wide range of food and market stalls, rides for both young and old and entertaining performances in an open-stage atmosphere; MEFF is a family fun event filled with enjoyment. For further details see MEFF website: <http://meff.ifew.com/> .

Canonisation of Blessed Mary McKillop Sunday, 17 October 2010 in Rome, with local celebrations all around Australia: a celebration of faith for all Australians.

Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice) – commemorating Abraham's faith-filled willingness to sacrifice his son as incorporated into the rituals of the Muslim *Hajj* (pilgrimage), circa 17 November.

Young Catholic Women's Interfaith Fellowship, Jan 28 – May 14 2011. A great opportunity to develop your faith and skills for living and contributing to our multi-religious society. For further information and registration see the *National Office for the Participation of Women* at <http://www.opw.catholic.org.au/from-the-office/young-catholic-women-s-interfaith-fellowship.html>

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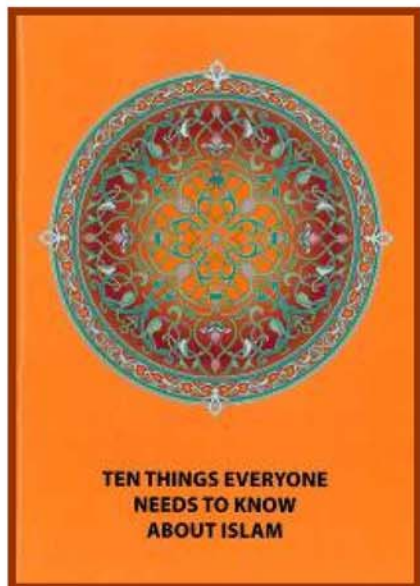
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Ten Things Everyone Needs to Know about Islam

by Professor John L. Esposito



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Professor Esposito is one of the leading experts in Islam in the English-speaking world. He is the editor of encyclopaedias on Islam and the author of over forty books. After the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States he was called on by the media and government and other audiences seeking explanation of those events. He collated the questions his audiences constantly asked him and in 2002 published his considered answers in ***What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam***. This small 29 page booklet is an extract from that book and presents his answers to the ten most burning questions that are on everyone's mind. His answers are clear, direct, balanced and informative.

Who needs this book?

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Ten Things Everyone Needs to Know about Islam

by Professor John L. Esposito

Everyone today needs a fair and accurate understanding of Islam so that they can help build better relations with Muslims and ensure that prejudice and misunderstandings do not harm relations between communities and nations. John Esposito's *"Ten Things Everyone Needs to Know about Islam"* is a marvellous way of achieving this.

Bishop Michael Putney, Bishop of Townsville, Chair of the Australian Catholic *Bishops Commission for Ecumenism and Interreligious Relations* and President of the *National Council of Churches in Australia*.

Essential reading for those interested in a better understanding between Muslims and people of other faiths.

Professor Abdullah Saeed, *Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies*
University of Melbourne

The need for secondary students to have a sound and fact based understanding of Islam and Muslims has never been greater. Christians have nothing to fear and much to gain from a greater knowledge of Islam. The Columban Mission Institute has rendered a great service for teachers with *Ten Things Everyone Needs to Know About Islam*. I heartily recommend it.

Dr Paul O'Shea, Senior RE Coordinator, St Patrick's College, Strathfield NSW

An excellent resource for pastors, teachers and community leaders who wish to gain a better understanding of Islam and Muslims in the contemporary world.

Dr Trish Madigan OP, Chair of *Commission for Interfaith Relations*
Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay

A very lucid explanation of the many important questions people often ask about Islam, and a great resource for anyone involved in inter-religious work in education, pastoral care and social space.

Imam Afroz Ali, Founder & President of the *Al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Sciences & Human Development*, Lakemba, NSW

I strongly recommend this as a valuable resource for all those engaged in religious education. It is clear, accessible and relevant to the interfaith dimension of living in contemporary Australian society.

Dr Sandra Carroll, Lecturer, *School of Religious Education*
Australian Catholic University, Strathfield NSW

This is a very worthwhile and timely resource. Professor John Esposito covers the essential and most common questions asked by many about Islam -one of these being the place of women. Esposito writes with sensitivity and clarity providing a valuable resource that can be used by a variety of people to help deepen their understanding of Islam.

Rev Seforosa Carroll, Chair, *Relations with Other Faiths*, Working Group of the Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly

This scholarly and very informative booklet should be considered by anyone in search of concise yet satisfying information about the religion of Islam.

Professor Ismail Albayrak, *Fethullah Gülen Chair in the Study of Islam and Muslim-Catholic Relations*, School of Theology, Australian Catholic University

John Esposito's book is a concise, easy-to-read source on the basics of Islam. For HSC students doing Studies of Religion it is a good, quick reference for exams and essays.

Mr Benjamin Salvosa, MA (Theological Studies), Religious Education Teacher, Rose Bay NSW

It is always great to have a scholarly book which clears away misunderstanding and illuminates a subject. Professor John Esposito is one of the greatest contemporary non-Muslim scholars of Islam. This concise book answers the 10 most asked questions about Islam by non-Muslims in the West. Contributing to a better informed public discourse about religions augurs well for a positive future.

Mehmet Saral, President, *Affinity Intercultural Foundation*, Auburn, NSW