



EDITORIAL

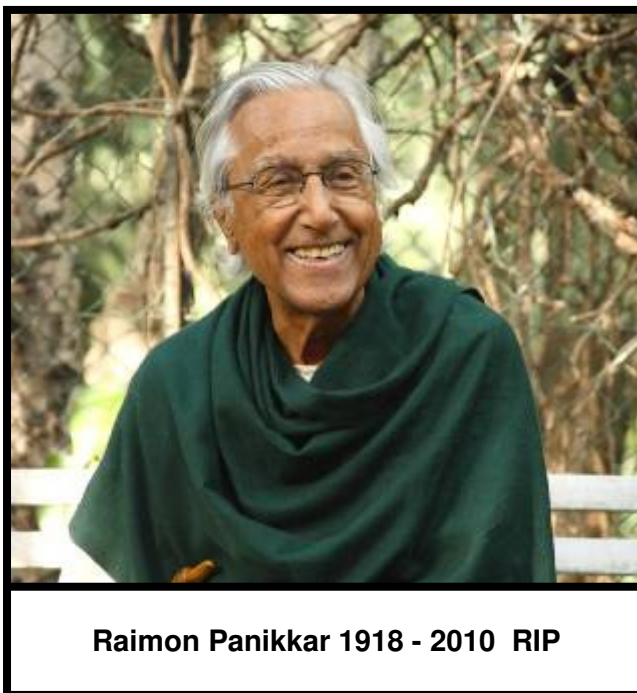
Raimon Panikkar, priest, philosopher and theologian died at the age of 91 at his home in Tavertet (Barcelona) Spain on the 26th of August. He has been hailed as the “apostle of interfaith dialogue” and a pioneer in the field of interfaith relations. We pay tribute to him in this issue of *Bridges* and acknowledge his great contribution over a life-time of study, immersion and reflection on the interrelated mysteries of God, humanity and the created cosmos. We present the eulogy written by Peter Kirkwood that appeared in Eureka Street and provide the link to the official Panikkar website for further information on his life and work (p. 4).

On 28 October 1965 *Nostra Aetate*, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, was promulgated (p. 3). It had faced contentious debate in the Council but eventually won near unanimous support. It marked a seismic change in the Church’s attitude to people of other religions. *Nostra Aetate* remains the source and inspiration for Catholic reflection and practice of interfaith dialogue throughout the world.

As such, *Nostra Aetate* informs our life and work at the Centre (p. 2) and is a motivating force for Catholic participation in the many interreligious activities we report from Australia and around the world (p 3).

The popes have called *Nostra Aetate* “the magna carta” of interreligious dialogue and they draw on it for their encounters with leaders of other religions, as does Pope Benedict XVI in his meeting with religious leaders during his recent visit to the UK (p. 5).

Nostra Aetate forms the bedrock conviction for the bishops as they reflected in the Synod on the challenges of living in the multi-religious context of the Middle East (p 6).



Raimon Panikkar 1918 - 2010 RIP

Nostra Aetate is the life-changing document that transformed Tom Michel and set him on the path of building better relations with Muslims. We review the fruit of his labours in his most recent book *A Christian View of Islam* (p. 7).

Finally, °*Eid al-Adha*, the Feast of Sacrifice, when Muslims commemorate the faith of Abraham in being willing to sacrifice his son is nearly upon us ... and in just over a month Christians will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, whom they believe to be God’s only Son, born by the power of

the Holy Spirit to be the sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.

The nearness, yet distance, between our different faith approaches to these foundational events echoes the nearness, yet distance, between our different religions, and remind us all of our complete dependence on God. I take this opportunity to wish all our readers, both Christian and Muslim, عيد مبارك, °*Eid Mubarik*, a very happy feast day.

Patrick J McInerney
Editor

Ten Things Everyone Needs to Know about Islam by Professor John Esposito

This latest publication of the Centre featured in the previous issue of *Bridges*. We have since advertised it through e-mails, e-newsletters and websites – thanks to all who cooperated with us in promoting this booklet. We are delighted at the response. Over two and a half thousand copies have been distributed—we twice had to order further copies! They have gone to parishes, schools, individuals and groups throughout Australia and as far away as Switzerland, the UK and the USA! We are confident this informative booklet will counter ignorance and stereotypes and promote better understanding of Islam and Muslims and better relations between Christians and Muslims. If you want a copy send in your order to the Centre.

Interfaith Peace Service

The 55th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations designated 21 September as the *International Day of Peace*. To mark the occasion an Interfaith Peace Service was held at St David's Uniting Church, Lindfield. **Fr Patrick McInerney** attended. People representing Aboriginal, Bahai, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jain, Jewish, Sikh, Sufi and Zoroastrian communities offered prayers for peace and there was time for silent reflection. After the prayers there were shared refreshments.

Other Ways Conference

On 24 September **Fr. Patrick McInerney** and **Fr Brian Vale** were among over 100 people who attended this ecumenical conference at Santa Sabina College, Strathfield, Sydney. The conference celebrated the achievements of the Decade for Overcoming Violence. Claudette Werleigh, former Prime Minister of Haiti and current Secretary General of Pax Christi International, delivered the first keynote address. This was followed by break out groups which dealt with various topics relating to violence. Patrick and Brian participated in interesting discussions in a break out group which focused on interfaith dialogue. Sr Susan Connelly and Mr Azim Khamisa were speakers during the dinner which followed. For a brief report see <http://www.assembly.uca.org.au/rof/news/189-otherways>

Companions in Dialogue

On 10 October **Fr Patrick McInerney** attended the Companions in Dialogue gathering at al-Ghazzali Centre on the theme of "Our Experience of God". Imam Afroz Ali and Fr Herman Roborgh SJ led the discussions.

Cyprus Independence Day

On 10 October, courtesy of Mr Michael Christodoulou, AM, DO, **Fr Patrick McInerney** was among the many guests who attended the celebration of Cyprus Independence Day at the Cyprus Community Club in Stanmore, NSW.

MEFF Festival

On 26 September **Fr Patrick McInerney** and **Fr Brian Vale** attended the VIP reception at the annual Multicultural Eid Fair and Festival (MEFF) held at Fairfield Showground. They enjoyed the speeches, the food, the entertainment and the celebratory atmosphere as Muslims of different ethnic backgrounds came together to celebrate Eid. About 30,000 people attended, making this annual event the largest gathering of Muslims in Australia.

Universal Peace Federation Awards Dinner

On 2 October **Fr Patrick McInerney** was a guest for the Universal Peace Federation's Awards Dinner at the Sapphire Function Centre in Auburn. Living for Others awards were presented to people for outstanding service to the community. For full report see <http://www.upf.org/upf-news/145-asia-oceania/3118-sixth-annual-living-for-others-awards>.

Abraham Conference – Practical Benefit

On 22 October the members of the Organizing Committee for the Abraham Conference comprising 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 presented a cheque for \$2,500.00 to the Children's Hospital at Westmead. The amount is from the proceeds of the Abraham Conference and is an example of how the Abrahamic faiths can come together in charity to make a practical difference to those in need in our society. For photo and report see <http://www.affinity.org.au/index.php/news-and-media-releases/177-abraham-conference-steering-committee-presents-cheque-to-childrens-hospital-westmead.html>

Course on Interreligious Dialogue

On 3 November **Fr Patrick McInerney** and **Fr Brian Vale** concluded their course on Interreligious Dialogue at the *Catholic Institute of Sydney*. This ran every Wednesday over the past three months and included a Mini-Parliament of the Worlds Religions and several guest lecturers. The students showed great attention and appreciation. The course will be offered again in a couple of year's time.

Prayer for Peace Day

On 3 October 2010 Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone delivered a message on behalf of Benedict XVI to the 25th International Meeting of Prayer for Peace in Barcelona which had been organized by the Community of Sant'Egidio. On the role of religions in relation to peace Cardinal Bertone said:

“In this difficult time of crisis and conflict, worsened by the increasing extent of the globalization, religions are called to realize their special vocation of service to peace and coexistence. All peoples, in order to live as an authentic community of brothers and sisters, need to be inspired and supported by the common foundation of spiritual and ethic values. In recognizing God as the source of the existence of every person, religions help society as a whole to promote the inviolable dignity of every human being. “By going back to this supreme principle we are able to perceive the unconditional worth of each human being, and thus to lay the premises for building a humanity at peace” (Benedict XVI, Message for the World Day of Peace 2008, n.6).”

For full details see:

<http://www.santegidio.org/index.php?pageID=1777&res=1&idLng=1064&idTesto=215>

20 Million Signatures for ARMS DOWN!

Young leaders from the world's great religious traditions convened in New York on 4 October to deliver a petition signed by more than 20 million people from 140 countries to H.E. Mr Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, United Nations Secretary-General's High Representative for Disarmament. The petition calls on all governments to officially pledge to cut their military budgets by 10% and re-allocate those funds toward development.

For more details see:

<http://religionsforpeace.org/news/press-release-arms-down.html>

Award for Documentary on Afghanistan

The SIGNIS-WACC Human Rights Award 2010 has been given to the documentary *The Garden at the End of the World*, directed by Australian filmmaker Gary Caganoff. The film follows the work of two remarkable women - humanitarian Mahboba Rawi, and internationally recognised permaculturalist Rosemary Morrow, who offer alternatives to international 'reconstruction' efforts that have patently not worked.

For more details see:

http://www.signis.net/article.php3?id_article=4202

Nostra Aetate's 45th Anniversary

28 October was the forty-fifth anniversary of the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council's decree on the Church's relation with other religions. In this excellent article entitled *A Ray of that Truth which Enlightens All People*—a key phrase from that document—Isabel Smyth SND examines the origins of the declaration, the enormous impact it had on inter-faith relations, and the questions it leaves us with today. We recommend this excellent summary of a document which helped transform the Catholic Church's approach to other religions.

For full details see:

http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20101027_1.htm

Has Multiculturalism Failed?

In ONLINE opinion, Australia's e-journal of social and political debate, John Töns states that while Angela Merkel has announced that multiculturalism had failed in Germany “the multicultural argument as it was developed in Australia was centred on the notion that there were a set of core values that all Australian residents needed to commit to so as to ensure we created a cohesive society.” He calls for a debate about these issues “but instead of focusing on multiculturalism it would be more profitable to identify what our core values are – precisely what is covered by the domain of public reason and what can be excluded.”

For full details see:

<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=11126&page=0>

Pondering Islam and its Discontents

John Allen, senior correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter, proposes that over the last decade the Vatican's concern has shifted from Judaism to Islam as the paradigmatic interfaith relationship of the Catholic Church. He proposes four reasons for the shift: (1) arithmetic – together Muslims and Christians make up over half of the world's population, (2) the upsurge of radicalism and violence in the name of religion, (3) the ramifications of the Pope's speech at Regensburg, and (4) the demographic shift from the North to the South. He then outlines four implications of this shift: (1) emphasis on intercultural rather than interreligious dialogue, (2) support for “healthy secularism”, (3) greater emphasis on reciprocity, and (4) greater focus on Shi'ite Islam. His article is thought-provoking and challenging and has implication for the future of Christian-Muslim relations. For full details see:

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/all-things-catholic>

Last Thursday, 26 August, at 4.15pm local time, in the beautiful village of Tavertet in the north of Spain, a great man died. Other theological luminaries have called him 'a pioneer of inter-religious dialogue', 'one of the world's most important philosophers of religion', 'a true spiritual giant of our times'. While the man himself eschewed such epithets, and such descriptions of holy men are often exaggerations, in his case they are patently true.

Raimon Panikkar was born on 3rd November, 1918 into a family of mixed race and religion. His mother was Catholic, from Catalonia, the north-east region of Spain, where he grew up, and his father was Indian Hindu from Kerala in the south of the subcontinent.

It was not only his mixed ethnic and religious background which prepared him for his profound interreligious journey. He had a formidable intellect and was a polymath. He gained three doctorates: the first in philosophy (1946); the second in science, in chemistry (1958); and the third in theology (1961), with his doctoral thesis becoming his first well known book entitled *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*. He spoke some dozen languages, and wrote his many books (around 60 titles) and articles in six of them: in Catalan, Spanish, French, German, Italian and English.

In 1955, as a young Catholic priest, Panikkar went to live in India, not as a missionary, but as a pioneer in the wave of Western Christian academics who went to study Eastern religious traditions. He lived and worked in a number of centres in India, including its holiest city, Varanasi. There he lived at Hanumanghat right on the banks of the Ganges, where his house overlooked the riverside terraces that are used for cremations, and the sacred river itself.

He mastered Sanskrit and Pali, the ancient languages of Hindu and Buddhist scriptures. He embarked on a huge work of commentary and translation of the oldest and most central of these, the Vedas, a task that took ten years. It resulted in an acclaimed book of 1000 pages, highly regarded even by Hindu scholars, called *Mantramanjari: The Vedic Experience*.

In 1967 he was invited to become Professor of Comparative Theology at the prestigious Harvard University in the USA, and he taught there till 1972. He then moved to the University of California at Santa Barbara where he remained till 1987. During this period, he frequently visited India, and was in demand as guest lecturer at universities in the UK, Europe and Latin America. In 1987, on his retirement, he returned to live in Spain, in Tavertet in the mountains outside Barcelona.

His journey amongst the great world religions was not just an academic exercise. It profoundly affected, and, in turn, was guided by his personal beliefs and spirituality. He may have had the head of a rigorous scholar, but at heart he was a mystic and contemplative. In him, these two modes of being and experiencing the world merged into a harmonious and productive unity.

On his return to Europe after many years absence, when asked about his faith pilgrimage, he answered with this now famous and often quoted reply, 'I left as a Christian, I found myself a Hindu, and I return a Buddhist, without having ceased to be a Christian.' This statement of his own multiple religious belonging is just one of many challenging insights and ideas that he wrote about with passion and eloquence.

Perhaps his three best known books that express his core theology are *The Intra-Religious Dialogue* (1978), *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics: Cross-Cultural Studies* (1979) and *The Cosmotheandric Experience: Emerging Religious Consciousness* (1993). Together they describe the emerging pluralistic world in which we live, and provide a cogent framework for dealing with it in a productive way.

A good summary of the significance of Panikkar comes from the late American theologian Ewert Cousins. He argued we are in a period of deep change in religion, and used the term 'mutation' in history to refer to times when there is a quantum leap forward. He saw the era of globalisation since World War II as bringing about such a mutation into a 'global matrix of cultures'. He saw Panikkar as being at the forefront of this transformation, that he was already living in this new future.

Among those who have made the transition, some become mediators of the future for the others who can make the passage. These mutational men may return from the future to draw others from the past across the abyss of the present and into the mutational world of the future. I suggest that Panikkar is such a 'mutational man', one in whom the global mutation has already occurred and in whom the new forms of consciousness have been concretised.

I had the privilege to meet Panikkar three times in his latter years. The final occasion was in 2008 when I made a [documentary](#) for ABC TV's *Compass* that followed Aboriginal elder, Joan Hendriks as she attended an inter-religious conference in Venice marking his ninetieth birthday. The film portrays him at home in Tavertet, gives a flavour of what he was like as a person, and shows how he was revered by those who knew and loved him.

Though frail and in his nineties, Raimon Panikkar worked right till the end. His last book, *The Rhythm of Being*, an updated version of his acclaimed Gifford Lectures that he delivered in 1989, was published just weeks ago. His funeral will take place on Friday, 3rd September, at the Benedictine Abbey of Montserrat in the mountains west of Barcelona near his final much loved home in Tavertet.

<http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=23034>

For other tributes see Panikkar's official website at <http://www.raimon-panikkar.org/> and also Joseph Prabhu at <http://ncronline.org/news/spirituality/raimon-panikkar-apostle-inter-faith-dialogue-dies>

During his recent pilgrimage to the UK Pope Benedict XVI met with representatives of other religions. Below are excerpts from his address and from the welcome given him by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

Pope Benedict

I would like to begin my remarks by expressing the Catholic Church's appreciation for the important witness that all of you bear as spiritual men and women living at a time when religious convictions are not always understood or appreciated. The presence of committed believers in various fields of social and economic life speaks eloquently of the fact that the spiritual dimension of our lives is fundamental to our identity as human beings, that man, in other words, does not live by bread alone (cf. Deut 8:3).

Your presence and witness in the world points towards the fundamental importance for human life of this spiritual quest in which we are engaged. Within their own spheres of competence, the human and natural sciences provide us with an invaluable understanding of aspects of our existence and they deepen our grasp of the workings of the physical universe, which can then be harnessed in order to bring great benefit to the human family. Yet these disciplines do not and cannot answer the fundamental question, because they operate on another level altogether. They cannot satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart, they cannot fully explain to us our origin and our destiny, why and for what purpose we exist, nor indeed can they provide us with an exhaustive answer to the question, "Why is there something rather than nothing?"

So it is that genuine religious belief points us beyond present utility towards the transcendent. It reminds us of the possibility and the imperative of moral conversion, of the duty to live peaceably with our neighbour, of the importance of living a life of integrity. Properly understood, it brings enlightenment, it purifies our hearts and it inspires noble and generous action, to the benefit of the entire human family. It motivates us to cultivate the practice of virtue and to reach out towards one another in love, with the greatest respect for religious traditions different from our own.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2010/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20100917_altre-religioni_en.html

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

We celebrate both our commonalities and differences, because if we had nothing in common we could not communicate, and if we had everything in common, we would have nothing to say. You have spoken of the Catholic Church as a creative minority. And perhaps that is what we should all aspire to be, creative minorities, inspiring one another, and bringing our different gifts to the common good.

Britain has been so enriched by its minorities, by every group represented here today and the intricate harmonies of our several voices. And one of our commonalities is that we surely all believe that faith has a major role in strengthening civil society.

In the face of a deeply individualistic culture, we offer community. Against consumerism, we talk about the things that have value but not a price. Against cynicism we dare to admire and respect. In the face of fragmenting families, we believe in consecrating relationships. We believe in marriage as a commitment, parenthood as a responsibility, and the poetry of everyday life when it is etched, in homes and schools, with the charisma of holiness and grace.

In our communities we value people not for what they earn or what they buy or how they vote but for what they are, every one of them a fragment of the Divine presence. We hold life holy. And each of us is lifted by the knowledge that we are part of something greater than all of us, that created us in forgiveness and love, and asks us to create in forgiveness and love. Each of us in our own way is a guardian of values that are in danger of being lost, in our short-attention-span, hyperactive, information-saturated, wisdom-starved age. And though our faiths are profoundly different, yet we recognize in one another the presence of faith itself, that habit of the heart that listens to the music beneath the noise, and knows that God is the point at which soul touches soul and is enlarged by the presence of otherness.

<http://www.thepapalvisit.org.uk/Replay-the-Visit/Speeches/Speeches-17-September/Chief-Rabbi-Lord-Sacks-Address-to-Pope-Benedict>



For further reports on the meeting of religious leaders see "The Virtues of Holy Living: The Pope and the Dialogue of Religions" by Michael Barnes SJ at http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20100918_3.htm and "The Music Beneath the Noise" by Christine Allen at http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20100921_1.htm

The Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops was convened in Rome 10- 24 October 2010. The theme was *“The Catholic Church in the Middle East: Communion and Testimony”*. Besides the Synod Fathers who were participants, the Assembly was also addressed by Muslim and Jewish religious leaders. Below is an excerpt from the Final Statement from the section titled *“Co-operation and Dialogue with our Fellow-Citizens, the Muslims”*. There follow some quotes from those who attended the Synod.

We are united by the faith in one God and by the commandment that says: do good and avoid evil. The words of the Second Vatican Council on the relations with other religions offer the basis for the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Muslims: *“The Church regards with esteem also the Muslims. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all- powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men” (Nostra Aetate 3).*

We say to our Muslim fellow-citizens: we are brothers and sisters; God wishes us to be together, united by one faith in God and by the dual commandment of love of God and neighbour. Together we will construct our civil societies on the basis of citizenship, religious freedom and freedom of conscience. Together we will work for the promotion of justice, peace, the rights of persons and the values of life and of the family. The construction of our countries is our common responsibility. We wish to offer to the East and



to the West a model of coexistence between different religions and of positive collaboration between different civilisations for the good of our countries and that of all humanity.

Since the appearance of Islam in the seventh century and to the present, we have lived together and we have collaborated in the creation of our common civilisation. As in the past and still existent today, some imbalances are present in our relations. Through dialogue we must avoid all imbalances and misunderstandings. Pope Benedict XVI tells us that our dialogue must not be a passing reality. It is rather a vital necessity on which our future depends (Pope Benedict XVI, Meeting with Representatives from the Muslim Communities, Cologne, 20 August 2005). Our duty then is to educate believers concerning interreligious dialogue, the acceptance of pluralism and mutual esteem.

Source: *Zenit*,
24 October 2010
<http://www.zenit.org/article-30744?l=english>

The situation of minorities is always a profound reflection of the social and moral condition of a society as a whole. The wellbeing of Christian communities in the Middle East is nothing less than a kind of barometer of the moral condition of our countries.

Rabbi David Rosen – for full text of his address to the Synod (7 pages) see <http://www.zenit.org/article-30645?l=english>

Muslims should realize that Christian emigration constitutes in truth a catastrophe for them in the first place. Hence, it is a civic duty of Muslims to contribute so that the Christian presence in the Middle East will take up again its credibility and its role, and not remain only a mere presence, so that the Middle East will again be what it has been in the course of centuries: a cradle of religion, of culture and of civilization.

Muhammad al-Sammak – for full text of the interview see <http://www.zenit.org/article-30702?l=english>

Conflicts, wars, violence and terrorism have gone on for too long in the Middle East. Peace, which is a gift of God, is also the result of the efforts of men of goodwill, of the national and international institutions, in particular of the states most involved in the search for a solution to conflicts. We must never resign ourselves to the absence of peace. Peace is possible. Peace is urgent. Peace is the indispensable condition for a life worthy of humanity and society. Peace is also the best remedy to avoid emigration from the Middle East.

Pope Benedict XVI, Homily at Closing Mass – for full text of the homily see http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20101024_chiusura-sinodo-mo_en.html#

A Christian View of Islam: Essays on Dialogue

Thomas F Michel SJ

Orbis Books 2010

xxiv + 214pp pages

ISBN: 9781571758607 A\$35.00

Tom Michel's *A Christian View of Islam* is essential reading for any Catholic who is serious about going beyond the myths and tendentious 'knowledge' concerning Islam so widespread today and facing the challenge of interacting with Muslims in an authentically Christian manner.

Michel's commitment to the Gospel is total; he certainly betrays no hint here of syncretism or a desire to gloss over uncomfortable differences between the two traditions. More courageously still, at a time when so many of us are finding a retreat into sectarianism of one sort or another alluring, Michel insists on Jesus Christ's costly refusal of all brands of factionalism. There is no reason for Christians to see themselves as superior to Muslims or anyone else. It's not ourselves or our religious accomplishment that we should boast of but the cross of Christ, which is at the very heart of Christian identity and to which we are called to witness by deed and word.

Then there is the struggle for justice. It is relatively easy to fall into the trap, when getting to know another religious tradition, of bracketing off any concern for the promotion of this great social good which Christians know to be willed by God. Again, Michel frames his encounter with Muslims within a commitment to the cause of the poor and a keen attentiveness to the way in which political and economic factors have decisively conditioned the Christian experience of Islam – and vice versa. I particularly appreciated the contemplative eye that sees the biblical character of Hagar, a central figure in Islam, as a figure for the many abandoned, economically vulnerable women of our world, hovering on the brink of oblivion, but loved and defended by God.

When it comes to the cultural dimension, Michel, not surprisingly, is well versed in aspects of Muslim ways of perceiving and acting. But the cultural dialogue in which he is engaging in this book is primarily with that of his reader and he is at his most prophetic in those few asides in which he addresses the culture of the prosperous West from which he comes but which he has learned to see in a new, more discerning and detached light thanks to his encounter with the Muslim world. I found one remark particularly on target:

It is tempting for Christians to feel complacently that we have been successful in reconciling our religious faith with the demands of modern life. We can even be tempted to boast that we are 'modern' while Muslims are 'backward.' Yet we may not be conscious of the extent to which we have compromised our faith with incompatible elements of modern or Western culture. We may be unaware of the ways in which the Christian churches have been wounded in the course of their encounter with liberal values. (p.107)

Michel is good at facing head on the many complaints that are made against interreligious dialogue. Isn't it too elitist, dealing with rarefied theological issues far removed from the reality of people's lives? Yes, he says, it can be, which is why more lay people in the Church should be involved. Isn't dialogue just 'words, words, words'?

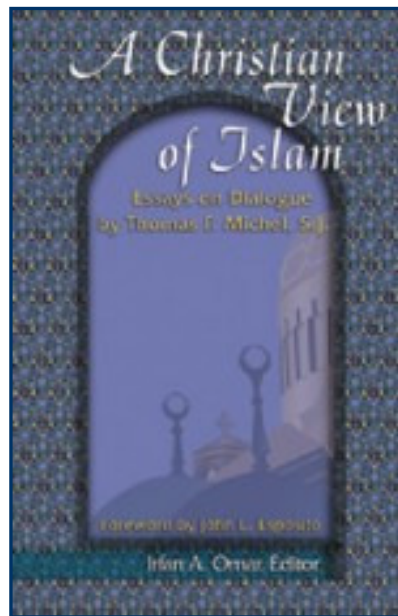
Again, it can be, hence the need to find ways for Christians and Muslims to work together for the social good wherever they can. It's refreshing to find an intellectual who is happy to assert that academic discussion has its place but is not necessary the only show in town. Michel is not afraid, either, of the risks involved in throwing in his lot with a particular group for more intensive dialogue. His engagement with the Turkish Fethullah Gülen movement is expressed in a number of his writings.

In addition to Michel's well rounded and reflective way of engaging, this book is valuable for the global sweep of its vision. The author has visited an

extraordinary array of countries in which there is a Muslim presence. This means that his analysis takes account of all the different experiences which Christians and Muslims can have of each other: the Western context in which Muslims are a recently arrived minority; the Middle East, where Christians have been a minority for centuries, their Churches even pre-dating the advent of Islam; and places like Nigeria where Christians and Muslims find themselves more or less on an equal footing. Michel explores the graces and difficulties of each situation without allowing any one to deny the validity of another.

Excerpt published with permission from *Jesuit Media Initiatives*. For the full text go to the Book Review on the website of **Thinking Faith**:

http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/BOOK_20101008_1.htm



°Eid al-Adha عيد الأضحى (Feast of Sacrifice)

For Muslims this major feast commemorates Abraham's faith-filled willingness to sacrifice his son. Aspects of this ancient event have been incorporated into the rituals of the Muslim *Hajj* (Pilgrimage), one of the five Pillars of Islam. The feast will be celebrated on 16/17 November 2011, the actual date depending on the formal sighting of the moon as declared by Muslim authorities in different locations.

International Sufi Symposium

The Australian Centre for Sufism and Irfanic Studies is holding a symposium at Harbourview Hotel, 17 Blue Street North Sydney on Saturday 4th of December. The theme is *An Ancient Psychology for a Modern Era: The Journey of the Ego-Self to the Spiritual-Self*. There will be a number of international guest speakers addressing issues in spiritual development, Sufism and psychology. For full details and registration see <http://www.australiansuficentre.org/events.htm>

DVD Documentary - The Baptism of Jesus Christ, Uncovering Bethany Beyond the Jordan

This DVD documents archaeological research into the place where Jesus was baptised. The DVD will be launched at St. Patrick's Cathedral Hall, Parramatta on Saturday 18th of December 2010. Following the screening Imam Afroz Ali and Rev Dr Herman Roborgh SJ will comment and lead discussion. For details and registration see http://www.alghazzali.org/events/xpresso_baptism

Christmas

Western Christians traditionally celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on the 25th of December. Many Eastern Churches follow an older calendar and celebrate Christmas on the 7th of January. Choosing these dates, close to the winter solstice, acknowledges that Christ is the light of the world who shines in the darkness: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (Jn 8:12)

Want to learn more about Islam and Muslims? Here are two opportunities.

1. *Introducing Islam* is an intensive 5-day course given by **Rev Dr Patrick McInerney** and Muslim guest lecturers at the *Catholic Institute of Sydney*. It is offered in intensive mode over five days, 19-21 January and 7-8 May 2011. E-mail: cisinfo@cis.catholic.edu.au
 2. *Islam: History, Theology and Culture* is an on-line course prepared and tutored by **Rev Dr Patrick McInerney**. It is offered in First Semester 2011 through the *Broken Bay Institute*. E-mail info@bbi.catholic.edu.au
- For more details on these courses see the **Insert** or contact the respective Institutes.

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Study Online Islam: History, Theology and Culture

Presenter

Rev Dr Patrick J McNerney

Commencing 28 February,
Semester 1 2011
RELI3000

Islam: History, Theology and Culture examines the theological and socio-political history of Islam and focuses in particular upon the emergence of the Qur'an, Hadith and basic teachings of Islam; the problems arising from Islam's rapid geo-political expansion during the 7th and 8th centuries, its political institutions, internal differentiation and its synergistic encounter with Greek philosophy and science; the development of Sharia law and its system of jurisprudence; and the rich diversity of its theological traditions and cultural expressions.

Rev Dr Patrick J McNerney is a Columban Missionary Priest; assigned to Pakistan for over twenty years. He is the Coordinator of the Columban Mission Institute's Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations & Centre for Mission Studies, a Board Member of ACU's Australia-Pacific Centre for Interreligious Dialogue and a member of the ACBC's Australian Catholic Council for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations.

For further information and registrations:

The Registry Office
The Broken Bay Institute
PO Box 340, Pennant Hills NSW 1715
Tel: (02) 9847 0030 Fax: (02) 9847 0031
Email: info@bbi.catholic.edu.au

Fees:

Credit (Award) Course: \$663, \$1240
Attendance only (no assessment): \$395 (\$350 – BBI Graduate or Award Student/Broken Bay Parishioner/Seniors Discount)

FEE-HELP available

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Introducing Islam MS543



19-21 January 2011
7-8 May 2011

Offered as an intensive to make it available to busy people like you!!!

WHY STUDY THIS COURSE?

One in five people in the world are Muslim. Together with Christians they make up over fifty per cent of the world's population. Increasingly, Christians and Muslims are neighbors at school, at work, at play, in the neighborhood.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Students undertaking the following **Awards**:
Bachelor of Theology (final year),
Graduate Certificate in Arts, Graduate
Diploma of Arts, Master of Arts and
Master of Divinity.



Priests, pastoral workers, teachers, catechists, members of Ecumenical and Interreligious Commissions, and concerned citizens can take the course as a non-award or audit student out of personal interest or for professional development.

WHAT IS INCLUDED? Pre-Islamic Arabia, the life of the Prophet Muhammad, the history and expansion of Islam, the Holy Qu'ran, the Sunnah, the Five Pillars, the *Shar'ah* (law), Sufism (spirituality), major groups within Islam (*Sunni* and *Sh'ah*), Christian-Muslim relations, contemporary revival movements, Islam in Australia

WHO IS THE LECTURER? **Patrick J McInerney LSAI, TheolM, PhD**



Columban Missionary Priest; assigned to Pakistan for over twenty years; Coordinator of the Columban Mission Institute's *Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations & Centre for Mission Studies*; Board Member of ACU's *Australia-Pacific Centre for Interreligious Dialogue*; member of the ACBC's *Australian Catholic Council for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations*.

Muslim Guest lecturers with expertise in Islamic scholarship will present an "insider's" view.

Registration closes Friday 10th December 2010

For information on the course contact:

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Email: patrickmcinerney@columban.org.au

For further information and registration contact:

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