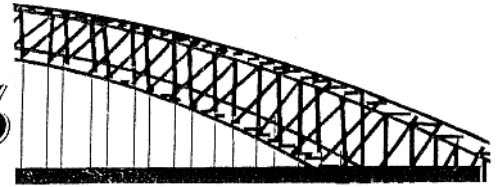


BRIDGES



A NEWSLETTER OF THE CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM NETWORK

Sponsored by the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations

Number 38

October 2007

MESSAGE FOR THE END OF RAMADAN 'ID AL-FITR 1428 H. / 2007 A.D.

Dear Muslim Friends,

It gives me special pleasure to send you for the first time friendly and warmest greetings from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue on the occasion of your joyful feast of 'Id al-Fitr, with which the month long fasting and prayer of Ramadan ends.

....

As religious believers, it's up to us all to be educators of peace, of human rights, of a freedom which respects each person, but also to ensure increasingly strong social bonds, because man must take care of his human brothers and sisters without discrimination. No individual in the national community should be excluded on the grounds of his or her race, religion, or any other personal characteristic. Together, as members of different religious traditions, we are called to spread a teaching which honours all human creatures, a message of love between individuals and peoples. We are particularly responsible for ensuring that our young people, who will be in charge of tomorrow's world, are formed in this spirit. It is above all the responsibility of families and then of those involved in the educational world, and of civic and religious authorities, all of whom have a duty to pay attention to the spread of a just teaching. They must provide everyone an education appropriate to his or her particular circumstances, especially a civic education which invites each young person to respect those around him or her, and to consider them as brothers and sisters with whom he or she is daily called to live, not in difference, but in fraternal care. It is thus more urgent than ever to teach to the younger generations, those fundamental human, moral and civic values which are necessary to both personal and community life. All instances of incivility must be made use of to remind the young of what is waiting for them in social life. It is the common good of every society and of the entire world which is at stake.

In this spirit, the pursuit and intensification of dialogue between Christians and Muslims must be considered important, in both educational and cultural dimensions. Thus all forces can be mobilised in the service of mankind and humanity so that the younger generations do not become cultural or religious blocs opposed to one another, but genuine brothers and sisters in humanity. Dialogue is the tool which can help us to escape from the endless spiral of conflict and multiple tensions which mark our societies, so that all peoples can live in serenity and peace and with mutual respect and harmony among their component groups.

To achieve this, I appeal to you with all my heart to heed my words, so that, by means of encounters and exchanges, Christians and Muslims will work together in mutual respect for peace and for a better future for all people; it will provide an example for the young people of today to follow and imitate. They will then have a renewed confidence in society and will see the advantage in belonging and taking part in its transformation. Education and example will also be a source of hope in the future for them.

This is the ardent hope I share with you: that Christians and Muslims continue to develop increasingly friendly and constructive relationships in order to share their specific riches, and that they will pay particular attention to the quality of the witness of their believers.

Dear Muslim Friends, once again I give you my warmest greetings on the occasion of your festival and I ask God of Peace and Mercy to give you all, good health, serenity and prosperity.

Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran

Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran
President
Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

6th International Abraham Conference

The 6th International Interreligious Abraham Conference was held on August 19th, at Sydney University, NSW. The theme was "Our Nation: Can We Grow Together?" The Keynote speaker was Prof Burhanettin Tatar (Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the Ondokuz Mayıs University, Samsun, Turkey) and the other speakers were Rev Dr David Gill (Former General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia), and Rabbi Zalman Kastel (Senior Rabbi & Chief Minister).

Professor Tatar addressed the philosophical and theological implications of the theme from an Islamic perspective. Rev Dr Gill talked about *Ten Tips for Togetherness* from the Christian point of view. Some of them were our common humanness, treating others as we would ourselves, common challenges that each faith faces, standing together in the public arena on social justice, mutual understanding and acknowledgement of faith communities other than Christian, Jewish and Muslim. Rabbi Kastel spoke to two points: growing together requires us to grow separately and, the need to assess our priorities and be realistic.

In the afternoon, there were three workshops run in parallel and there were three speakers (Jewish, Muslim and Christian) in each workshop. The theme for Workshop A was "How might our common values contribute to building our nation?". And the speakers were Mr. Vic Alhadeff (Jewish), Prof Michael Horsburgh (Christian) and Ms Eman Dandan (Muslim). The theme for Workshop B was "What would you identify as the greatest challenge to growing together today?" And the speakers were Rabbi Zalman Kastel (Jewish), Dr Michael Casey (Christian) and Mr Irfan Yusuf (Muslim). The theme for Workshop C was "In what sense are we on the cutting edge of achieving a socially cohesive society?". The speakers were Mrs Lynda Ben-Menashe (Jewish), Rev Mary Pearson (Christian) and Prof Ali Fuat Bilkan (Muslim).

There were 120 participants from different faith traditions. The atmosphere was warm and friendly. Everybody seemed to engage and to enjoy the Conference. The workshops were very relevant and interactive and there were good reports from each workshop with some practical steps to follow. The conference was organised by Affinity Intercultural Foundation; Columban Mission Institute; Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney; Jewish Board of Deputies, NSW and the Uniting Church, and sponsored by Parramatta Catholic Diocese and the NSW Community Relations Commission.

Missionary writes ABC Guide to Islam

"ABC per Capire i Musulmani" (ABC's of Understanding Muslims) is written from the Christian perspective by a priest from the Society of the Missionaries of Africa, known as the White Fathers. It aims to show that Christians and Muslims should live and work together in friendship and at the service of the common good.

In the 63-page volume published by San Paolo, author Father Maurice Borrmans explains terminology like Shariah, Jihad and the Muslim concept of society and state.

The four sections of the book go through the history of Islam; the Muslim religion, including its worship and spirituality; the law, culture and politics of Islam; and interreligious dialogue.

Father Borrmans highlights the example of recent Popes in dealing with Islam and speaks of the "Christian challenge," which requires "theological discernment" and "prophetic effort."

Father Borrmans lived in Algeria and Tunisia for 20 years and then moved to Rome to teach at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies. He was a consultant of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, is also the author of "Guidelines for Dialogue Between Christians and Muslims," (Paulist Press, 1990.)

Source: August 28, 2007 (Zenit.org)

All Iraqi minorities under threat

Recently suicide bombers in the Iraqi town of Qahataniya murdered more than 400 Yazidis, members of a small but ancient religious sect. A US military official called it "an act of ethnic cleansing". Many interpreted it as the deadliest of the war so far. According to Clive Baldwin, the director of international advocacy for the Minority Rights Groups, "last week's attack was the single most deadly attack in Iraq since 2003 and clearly targeted at one particular group". He also mentioned that it is not only harassment and violence towards Yazidis group, but also other ancient religions such as the Mandeans and the 2000-year-old Christian communities.

Source: *The Tablet Publishing Company*

Whirling Dervishes of Rumi

Recently Australian Intercultural Society and Affinity Intercultural Foundation have organized two events/performances of the Whirling Dervishes of Rumi to mark the 800th anniversary of the birth of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi (a well known Muslim Sufi and philosopher) to coincide with UNESCO's declaration of the year 2007 as the year of Rumi. The first event was held on August 4th at the Sydney Town Hall, NSW and the second on August 6th at the Dallas Brooks Hall, Melbourne. Both events attracted huge crowds who were not disappointed with the magnificent performance. The events were fully sponsored by the Ministry for Tourism and Culture of the Republic of Turkey and the Consuls General to Australia of the Republic of Turkey. It was an opportunity for many Australians to learn about Turkish culture and the great Sufi Master Rumi.

The Mevlevi Dervishes are internationally known and have been travelling the world from the beginning of the year to perform the Whirling Dervishes of Rumi to mark the international year of Rumi which was declared by UNESCO.

Sources: *Dialogue Asia-Pacific, Issue 13, July-Sep 2007*

The Imam and the Pastor

On 7th August the Centre organised an event presenting a documentary called "The Imam and the Pastor". The event was held at the Catholic Institute of Sydney (CIS), Strathfield. Rev Dr Gerard Kelly (president of CIS) gave the welcoming address stressing the importance of interreligious relations in contemporary Christian theology and practice. Fr Gerry who is from Nigeria and presently assistant priest at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta gave the overview of Nigeria. Then the documentary was screened followed by a few minutes sharing with neighbours. Imam Afroz Ali, Founder of al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Science & Human Development, Bankstown, NSW and Rev Dr. Shane Clifton, Academic Dean, Lecturer in Theology at Southern Cross College responded to the video and responded to questions from the audience. The event concluded with the reading of a **Peace Affirmation** adapted from the Kaduna Peace Declaration.

About 160 people from diverse Christian and Muslim backgrounds attended the event and were deeply affected by the horrors these religious leaders experienced, and inspired by the faith-based forgiveness that they modeled. The evening was very engaging. Informal conversations continued for a long time afterwards over shared refreshments.

Centre participated in an Interfaith Dialogue

The Australian Catholic University, Strathfield hosted a visit by Dr Victor Batarseh, Mayor of the City of Bethlehem, and his entourage on 3rd September.

The theme for the session was *Holy Places: Our Shared Heritage and an Interfaith Dialogue*. There were two presentations by Fr Mark O'Brien op and Imam Afroz Ali prior to the main address given by Dr Victor Batarseh. This was followed by group discussions. There were participants from the Christian and Islamic faith traditions. Sr Pauline and Fr Patrick were among the participants and found the session very stimulating.

Jewish Christian Muslim Conference

Sr Suporna Rozario attended the 4th Jewish Christian Muslim Conference which was held on 2-5 July at the Palloti College, Millgrove, Melbourne. The theme for the conference was "Healing Memories: History and Reconciliation". There were about 170 people from Jewish Christian and Muslim faith traditions. The participants included senior school students and couples with children. There was a very good friendly atmosphere. Being together for four days, (it was a live-in conference) the participants learnt a lot and built a good relationship with one another.

In-service for Teachers

On the 4th August, Sr Pauline Rae held an in-service for the staff of St Agnes High School, Rooty Hill at St Joseph's Spirituality Centre, Baulkham Hills, NSW. There were 60 teachers from different cultural and faith

backgrounds who were very interested to learn and explore interfaith dialogue and engaged in a friendly dialogue.

Interfaith Sydney website launch

On the 6th of September Interfaith Sydney website was launched at the Old Parliament House at Parramatta Park. Mr Jim Mein, moderator of the Uniting Church NSW Synod, gave the keynote address and launched the website. There was a good crowd from the different faith traditions. Two of the members from the Centre attended the launching. Interfaith Sydney website is a project of the Home Encounters Network (HEN) and the purpose of it is to provide a meeting place for organisations involved in interfaith activities to share and publicise information about their organisation and interfaith events that they are organising. Be informed and get involved in interfaith dialogue. Please visit www.interfaithsydney.org.au

Year 10 Students Social Justice Day

On 11th of September, Broken Bay Diocese held the Social Justice Day for Year 10 students. Sr Suporna from the Centre and Hajer from the Affinity Intercultural Foundation held a workshop on *Muslim: To Be Befriended*. The workshop ran in two sessions and there were about 20 students from different schools in both sessions. The students were very interactive and interested to learn about Christian-Muslim Relations.

Presentation to Year 12 Students

Fr Patrick McInerney gave a presentation to the HSC students at St Joseph's College, Hunter's Hill on "Religion and Peace." He emphasized the beliefs that Christians and Muslims hold in common, as well as our differences. Christians make up around one third of the world's population, and Muslims one fifth. Together we make up over fifty percent of the world's population. As well as respecting and uncovering God's presence and action in other religions, promoting better relations between Christians and Muslims is imperative for building peace and harmony in society. The presentation was followed by lively interaction with the students. Thanks to Belinda Witter, the Religious Education Coordinator, for arranging the programme.

Asia Pacific Centre for Interreligious Dialogue

Sr Pauline Rae has accepted an invitation to be a member of the Advisory Committee of APCID which operates under the auspices of Australia Catholic University (ACU) National.

Visitors

Fr Tom Pelman from the Archdiocese of Chicago, USA visited the Centre on 3rd September. He is on sabbatical in Australia and is interested in spirituality in different religions. The Centre was happy to share its resources with him.

Fr Tim Norton SVD has recently visited the Centre as he is interested to establish an interfaith and intercultural community. The Centre was very happy to discuss and give some suggestions.

Books on Interreligious Dialogue

The Christian-Muslim Relations Centre has some copies of Cardinal Francis Arinze's books "Building Bridges:

Interreligious Dialogue on the Path to World Peace" and "Meeting Other Believers: The Risks and Rewards on Interreligious Dialogue". They are both excellent books while being relatively short, simple and easy to read. They have been out of print but if anyone is interested to buy we have a limited number of copies. For enquiries contact the Centre by phone - 02 9352 8011 or email paulinerae.cmi@columban.org.au

MUSLIM WOMEN IN WESTERN SOCIETY by HAMIDEH MOHAGHEGH

The following article was published in "Mission Outlook", July 2007, Vol 40, No. 2

Women's issues in Islam are to this day a current and highly explosive topic. In the western world there are many who believe that due to the backwardness of Islam and its strict laws, Muslim women are isolated, oppressed and imprisoned. This false view is confirmed through lack of authentic information, biased media reporting and stories about the inhuman circumstances of the lives of some Muslim women.

There are no stereo type Muslim women. 'Islamic values' vary from country to country and even within one country. In order to understand the attitudes and the way of life of a Muslim woman, it is essential to know her context and particular understanding of Islam. The lives of Muslim women in Germany are influenced by tradition, Islam and the West. The traditional and Islamic influences are communicated through education, generally in accordance with the parents' understanding of Islam and there can be clashes with Western values. It is one of the challenges of our time to learn to live in the one society with people of different traditions and religions. 'Being different' alone cannot legitimate withdrawal from society.

Islam as a holistic religion makes numerous ethical recommendations for all areas of life. Mutual respect and modest behaviour between men and women are important fundamental principles in the code of honour between sexes. While there is very little in the Qur'an itself regarding a detailed code of behaviour, there are numerous traditions (the Hadith) which try to justify the exclusion of women from society on the grounds of 'the laws of religion'. These traditions ignore the early Islamic period when there was an active interchange and fruitful collaboration between men and women, free from strict and draconian obligations. We know of women who passed on the teaching of Islam as teachers, theologians and legal scholars and were visibly present in society.

In Islam all human beings are autonomous and it is their responsibility to shape their lives. Participation in the life of the community is not only a right but an obligation. This understanding of Islam makes it difficult for some women to cope with the practices of some mosques which prescribe a rigorous separation of the sexes and elevate these to being laws 'not to be contradicted', which deny women active participation. For other Muslim women spaces of their own represent safe areas where they can shape their actions with other women without restriction.

Western feminist movements have many successes to their name. They deserve respect and recognition. The question is whether it is possible for Muslim women to accept these movements uncritically with regard to their own emergence. The development of the situation of women in the west is being viewed critically by Muslim women. High divorce rates, the destruction of marriage and family life, addiction, violence, indiscriminate sexual liberty, an increase in the number of single women without anyone to care for them, are seen as negative consequences of the modern theories and views. And women in the West still have to struggle with inequalities and injustices.

Globalisation has made it inevitable that different cultures and religions influence each other. The majority of Muslims are aware of the necessity to think differently and are prepared to make new attempts at 'enlightenment'. Ways forward must be explored which correspond to Islamic theology, history and reality. The revival of the tradition of Muslim philosophers such as Averroes (d. 1189), Avicenna (992-1050) and al-Kindi (ca. 800-870) can pave the way to an 'Islamic enlightenment'. None of them believe that faith and rational thinking were mutually exclusive.

A woman-centered interpretation of the Qur'an world focus on the actual Qur'anic text and read it in its historical context. This means that the verses specific to women are to be read and understood in the light of the situation and the position of women in the seventh century on the Arabian Peninsula. Such a reading should not lead to the faith being relativised. It should rather enable us to practice our faith in a conscious and contemporary way that can be legitimized by the Qur'an and basic principles of Islamic teaching. Whether Muslim communities engage with and recognise this kind of reading depends on the willingness of the respective communities to engage with new approaches and to accept them.

That women teach as theologians is taken for granted and has a long tradition. Khadija, Um Salama and Aisha, the wives of the Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fatima and his granddaughter Zainab were the active Muslim women of the seventh and eighth centuries. Rabiya of Basra is seen as the founder of Islamic mysticism. Numerous Muslim mystics were her pupils, and in turn their teaching influenced the works of later Muslim mystics. Among contemporary women theologians, Banu Amin (1895-1983, Iran) achieved the scholarly grade of *hudijat al Islam* with 15 volumes of Qur'anic exegesis to her credit and permission to practice law in her own right (*idjithad*).

Until fairly recently the question of whether a woman could be an imam (prayer leader) was relatively insignificant. While the communal prayers for women can be led by a female leader, the prayers for men and for men and women together have traditionally only been led by a male imam. Until March 2005, when Amina Wadud, an Islamic scholar from Virginia, led the Friday prayers for men and women in New York, there had been no significant efforts on the part of women to change this tradition. This triggered worldwide discussions among Muslims about whether a woman could give the Friday sermon. While traditionalists held the view that this was impossible, there were others who 'did not see being a woman as an obstacle to leading the prayers of the community'.

Muslim women have a long and difficult path ahead of them to achieve the rights which Islam allows them and which are compatible with human rights; what is needed is 'enlightenment' in the most comprehensive sense as an obstacle to progress and development.

The conviction that Islam grants women the freedom to be active in all areas of life is not sufficient, for restrictions imposed on them by specific cultures and the laws of some Muslim societies do in reality limit women's freedom. The current perception of Islam as the 'root of all evil' makes trusting life in western societies difficult and blocks the valuing of those elements of Islam that are worthy of recognition and from which these societies could benefit. Islamic identity is by no means incompatible with belonging to a secularised society; all involved should take note and recognise this. Mutual trust and respect for the different form of life in our society is the foundation for a peaceful life with each other.

(With acknowledgment to *Concilium*)

MESSAGE FROM THE YOUTH TO THE YOUTH

Interreligious Youth Meeting 4-8 November 2006, Assisi, Italy

We came together in Assisi, called from nearly thirty nations and representing thirteen religious traditions, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the historic Day of Prayer for World Peace in 1986. Invited by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and sent by our religious communities and organisations, we young people came here to carry forward the flame of peace ignited by our spiritual leaders 20 years ago in these same sacred spaces.

We encountered one another with honesty and sincerity to build up the bonds of fraternity that unite us all as brothers and sisters in our humanity, fashioned by and in God. From our commonly held desires for happiness, justice and truth, we entered into genuine dialogue.

We shared and learned about each other's cultures and beliefs, not to minimize or ignore our differences, but to grow in mutual respect, esteem and understanding. Though we do not share the same religious convictions, we have all inherited the same earth and share a common responsibility to be faithful citizens of society and to be good stewards of creation.

We prayed according to our respective religious traditions, imploring from God the precious gift of peace. While our prayers were offered in different places, languages and ways we were united in a single purpose: praying for peace. In this way, we testified to the truth that "prayer does not divide but invites and is a decisive element for an effective pedagogy of peace, hinged on friendship, reciprocal acceptance and dialogue between Different cultures and religions" as Pope Benedict wrote in his message for the 20th Anniversary of the first Assisi Meeting.

We walked as pilgrims to the site of St. Francis of Assisi's conversion eight hundred years ago, when God called out to Francis "Go, rebuild my house." Likewise today, in the spirit of our respective religions, we young people hear the call to "*Go, rebuild our world,*" which is too often broken by violence and war.

We appeal to all people that peace is not something only to be sought in halls of government, but also in the halls of our synagogues, our churches, our mosques, our temples, our pagodas, our gurudwaras, our atash berhrams, our schools, our workplaces, our homes and most importantly in our hearts.

We will strive to follow the path to peace, guided by the precepts of our respective religious traditions. In the "spirit of Assisi" and with a united voice, we echo the words of the great ambassador of peace, the Servant of God Pope John Paul, II as we cry out:

Violence never again!
War never again!
Terrorism never again!
In the name of God,
May every religion bring upon the earth
Justice and peace,
Forgiveness and life, Love!

We young people represent a new generation and a new hope. We resolve to return to our families and communities, to be advocates for interreligious and intercultural understanding and respect. We accept the responsibility of continuing the dialogue begun here in Assisi and we fully commit ourselves to working for justice and to be instruments of peace in our homelands and in every corner of the earth.

Michael Fitzgerald and John Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue: A Catholic View* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2006), xi-255

Reading *Interfaith Dialogue: A Catholic View* is rather like approaching a smorgasbord of delicacies and delights. Much of what is on display is in the form of small tasty morsels, but there is enough of substance to provide a decent meal.

“Interfaith Dialogue” is a joint venture by Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, a member of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) a Catholic religious order who was Secretary of the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue from 1987 to 2002, succeeding Cardinal Arinze as President in October 2002, and Dr John Borelli, a lay theologian who worked for sixteen years, from 1987, as Associate Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. The chapters are contributed individually by each author. The book is arranged in three sections: Part I deals with religious pluralism, Part II, more specifically with Muslim-Christian relations and Part III with religions other than Islam and some wider issues.

Each of the authors can be said to be in some way “midwives” of the interfaith movement in the Catholic Church, being present at its birth and nurturing it in its early years. This becomes evident in the introductory section of the book, where each begins by relating his own personal journey which began before Vatican II when “most felt that the apostolate among the Muslims was a waste of time”. Then came the exciting time of Vatican II during which both authors, independently in their own time and place, had the opportunity to hear about the new thinking coming from the Council regarding the attitude of the Catholic Church towards other religions. Both were inspired by meeting such Vatican II luminaries as Karl Rahner, who at the time was developing his theology, innovative at the time, of “anonymous Christians”.

Both Fitzgerald and Borelli then went on, in their respective contexts, to play a role in implementing and developing the insights and recommendations of the Council. Through their academic activities, international and national meetings and personal contacts, they each played a significant role over the next 40 years in making available to the Catholic world, and to those of other faiths, the new theological insights expressed in such documents as the Council’s Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*) and its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) together with *Ecclesiam Suam*, Paul VI’s encyclical on the Church.

Although the content of the book reflects the experience of the authors and is not a comprehensive study of Catholic engagement in interfaith dialogue, it covers a remarkable diversity of topics and there is something of interest for almost everyone. Attention is given to the historical development of interfaith dialogue in the Catholic Church with reference to the first steps taken by Popes John XXIII and Paul VI. Also of interest is a chapter describing the stages of the formal Buddhist-Catholic dialogue in the USA.

Theological questions that might arise for Catholics are covered, such as the meaning of religious pluralism, the theological basis for interfaith dialogue, and the person of Jesus. Two areas of interest which are treated in more depth are the concept of forgiveness in the various religions and the place of Mary in Islam. Pastoral issues addressed include interfaith marriages, the possibilities and limitations of interfaith prayers, personal qualities needed for one to participate fruitfully in interfaith dialogue, religious pluralism and the parish, and question of “conversion”.

Some fascinating aspects of the modern interfaith journey emerge. For example, there is a brief mention of the contemporaneous roles played by Egyptian Islamist intellectual and activist Sayyid Qutb and Pope John XXIII around 1959 as each struggled with the need for their respective religions to engage with the modern world.

A topical index would have assisted a casual reader to make better use of this book. However, despite this lack, *Interfaith Dialogue: A Catholic View* is a useful resource which contains many gems of insight and much practical wisdom gleaned from the Catholic heritage in interfaith relations.

Trish Madigan OP



*The Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations wishes
Eid Mubarak to all our Muslim brothers and sisters.
May God’s blessings, joy and peace be with you all.*

WHAT'S COMING UP

September

Sep 13-Oct 13 *Ramadan* (Month of fasting for Muslims)

October

- 13 ***Eid al-Fitr*** (end of fasting and one of the major feasts for Muslims). Find out what is happening in your local area to celebrate *Eid*. Send a card or a gift to your Muslim friends or neighbor and engage in dialogue.
- 20 **Documentary Film Night – 7.30pm** Al-Ghazzali Centre Academy presents *The Power of Community*, a film of the hardships and struggles as well as the community and creativity of the Cuban people during the difficult times of the Soviet Union's collapse in 1990.
- 27 **The Practice of Interfaith Dialogue:**
Date: 27th October 2007
Time: 9am- 4pm
Venue: Centre for Ministry
16, Mason Drive, North Parramatta
Cost: General \$30, Students/Unwaged \$20 (includes Lunch)
Registration close: 19th October 2007
For more information and registration please call or email
02 8838 8914, jorger@nsw.uca.org.au
- 28 **MEFF Eid Festival and Fair 2007 10am**
This year the 23rd MEFF will be held on Sunday 28 October 2007 at the Fairfield Showground in Sydney. Entry is only \$15 for a family of 5, \$5 per adult or child and FREE for children under 2 years old – great family value! Rides are not included in the entry price.
- 30 **An Interfaith Panel on the topic “The Hospitality of God”.**
Time: 7.30pm – 9.00 pm
Venue: St Charles Borromeo Church, Ryde.
Speakers: Trish Madigan, Josie Lacy and Zuleyha Keskin.

November

- 17 **An offering of Devotional Songs** (*Hindu*)
By Avijit Sarkar and Pushpa Jagdish
Time: 6.00 to 7.30pm (tea/snacks at 5.30)
Venue: Vedanta Hall, 15 Liverpool Rd, Croydon. Free Admission (Donations welcome).
- 23 **Faith Ecology Network** (FEN) is holding an interfaith event on “Seven Steps to Sustainability for Faith Communities” at Croydon, Sydney. Contact: Anne Lanyon annelanyon.cmi@columban.org.au

Introduction to Islam Course

The Kings Cross Interfaith Centre in conjunction with the Affinity Intercultural Foundation and The Emmanuel Synagogue will be running an introduction to Islam course over the three evenings of 18th, 25th November and 2nd December from 6.00 – 8.30pm at the Emmanuel Synagogue 7 Ocean St, Woollahra. The course will focus on religion, contemporary issues and history. All are welcome. R.S.V.P Ms. Lesa-Belle Furhagen 02 9380 4702 or 0439 327 328 or interfaith@bigpond.com.au

Summer School:

An Introductory Course on Islam

Date: 16-18, 21-22 January 2008
Time: 9.30am- 4.00pm
Venue: Catholic Institute of Sydney, Strathfield.
Presenter: Fr Patrick J McInerney and Muslim Guest lecturers.
For Registration, contact Catholic Institute of Sydney, 99 Albert Rd, Strathfield, NSW 2135, Ph 02 9752 9500, email cisinfo@cis.catholic.edu.au
(The course is offered for Award, Non Award and Audit).

Conference: Women, Faith and a Culture of Peace

An Asia-Pacific Interfaith Symposium will be held on February 23rd mid-afternoon to 25th mid-afternoon 2008 at the Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University, Nathan Campus, Brisbane, Australia.
Registration fees: Full AUS \$100 (US \$90)
Concession (NGOs) AUS \$70 (US \$60)
(Scholarships up to Aust \$1,500 will be available for women coming from outside Australia).
For registration form and more information visit www.griffith.edu.au/centre/mfc/

If you have a group or know of upcoming events in your local area, let us know and we will include it in our future issues of *Bridges*

MEETING POINT

Are you interested in meeting people of other faiths? Maybe even hosting a gathering?

Contact the Centre on (02) 9352 8011 or cmr.cmi@columban.org.au for assistance or more information



Some mosques are open to visitors. Try finding out where the local mosque in your area is, and see if they run guided tours. Contact the Centre if you are not sure where to look, and we'll try to help you to find one.



WIN (Women Interfaith Network)

A group of women from different faiths meet in Hurstville on the 4th Monday morning of each month. Contact Lorraine Watson on (02) 9579 2653 for further details.

A group also meets at Pyrmont one evening each month. All faith traditions are welcome. Contact Shehara Viswanathan on 0402 890 046 for further details.

WIN Merrylands meets at the Baha'i Centre, 107 Derby St, and Silverwater on the second Monday of each month. Contact Sister Suporna Rozario on 0439 856 082 or supornarozario@yahoo.com.



'Salam Cafe' is a panel discussion/talk show type featuring a panel of young Aussie Muslims who interview people, make jokes, and talk light heartedly about issues to do with Islam - a combination of entertaining and informative.

For further information and air times, please look up the Salam Cafe Website: www.salamcafe.com.au.



Mission of Hope

Is a group run by volunteer professionals in the area of health (medical/mental/allied) and community development. It is a monthly discussion forum for people dealing with Muslim clients. Discuss issues surrounding Muslims in health and welfare, share professional experiences in dealing with Muslim patients/clients and develop strategies to address the needs of Muslims in Sydney. It is suited to both Muslim and non-Muslim service providers.

If you are working in the profession of health and community development and would like to participate, please either email Mission of Hope info@missionofhope.org.au or contact Hanan Dover 0422 908 323 h.dover@missionofhope.org.au for more Information.

✂

Help us spread the news about the Centre and BRIDGES and send us the name and address of someone else whom you think may be interested. (Please complete details below)

There are no subscription fees for BRIDGES, but a kind donation would be appreciated as it would help with the cost of production



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