



From the Editor: A Feast of Friendship



عيد مبارك *Eid Mubarak* (lit. "Blessed Feast")
Happy Feast Day!

For the past month, Muslims have been observing Ramadan: fasting from dawn till dusk, doing extra prayers, extending charity to those in need, and being more mindful of God. Ramadan has also become a wonderful interfaith season. Muslims have invited others to break the fast with them at the evening *iftar* meal. I have been privileged to attend many such events. I am grateful for the welcome, generosity and hospitality of my hosts.

As an act of Christian solidarity with Muslims, I too have prayed, fasted and given charity, and encouraged other Christians to do the same (see Christian Reflection on Ramadan, p. 2). This solidarity is also being practised in other parts of the world (see Catholics join Muslims in Welcoming Ramadan, p. 3).

We extend greetings to all Muslims for *Eid al-Fitr*, the Feast of the Breaking (of the fast at the end of the month of Ramadan). We share the goodwill message from the *Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue*, which invites Christians and Muslims to move from competition to cooperation (pp. 6-7).

We report on Cardinal Tauran's visit to Saudi Arabia and his message about the importance of interreligious dialogue (pp. 4-5). We hope the visit will bear fruit in greater mutual understanding and cooperation between Catholics and Muslims.

Church teaching is clear that dialogue is an integral part of the church's approach to other people (p. 8). Indeed, where fear, suspicion, prejudice and ignorance can keep us apart, dialogue is all the more necessary. We need to move out of our comfort zones, extend the hand of friendship, get to know the other, and build relations.

- I strongly recommend a visit to ***So That You Might Know Each Other***, an exhibition of Islamic faith and culture at the *National Museum of Australia* in Canberra (p. 9).
- Come to the ***Abraham Conference*** on Sunday 5 August, which brings together Jews, Christians and Muslims (p. 10). The theme is "*Pillars of Peace*".
- I invite young people to have a voice and a vote in ***Youth PoWR*** (Parliament of the World's Religions) on 19 August (p. 11). The theme is "*Harmony for Humanity: Unity in Diversity*".
- I encourage each person to go out of their way to make friends with their neighbours and work colleagues, especially those from other faiths and cultures. By building friendship, you are investing in a safer, more harmonious and more enjoyable life for yourself and others.

Patrick McInerney
Editor



News From the Centre



Grand Mufti & Former Grand Mufti - Credit: SBS News

Grand Mufti's Iftar Dinner

On 26 May **Ryan Epondulan** attended the Ramadan Iftar Dinner hosted by the former Grand Mufti, Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed. The event was a great opportunity to welcome the Melbourne-based Imam Abdul Aziem Al-fifi as the new Grand Mufti, and to thank the former Grand Mufti for his contributions and service over the past six years.

The Grand Mufti vowed to do his "best to benefit the Muslim community and the broader Australian Community." "Because we're all one family and we all have to help each other and work together." Video of the Grand Mufti is available at <https://goo.gl/iTxVd4>



Conference in Malaysia

Fr Patrick McInerney was invited by a Muslim organisation, the *Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia* (IKIM), a government think tank on matters Islamic, to present at their international symposium, *Moderation in Multi-Religious Societies: Towards Peace and Harmony*, in Kuala Lumpur on 27 March. Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, opened the conference and gave a keynote address. Fr Patrick's paper titled, "*Moderation in Multi-Religious Societies: The Roles of Religious Leaders to Combat Extremism*", was very well received.

The Faith Feed

On 23 March **Patrick McInerney** attended **The Faith Feed**, a faith-formation initiative of the *Institute for Mission*. He had recommended the Muslim speaker, Maria Ishaq. The other two speakers were Christians, who spoke about family and sexual identity. Maria shared how she is named after the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus.

She highlighted some key points of solidarity between her Muslim faith and Christianity. She reflected how Mary, as a key figure in Islam & Christianity, has influenced her spiritual journey. Maria's full speech is available at <https://goo.gl/FVjpnL>

A Christian Reflection on Ramadan

We prepared this issue of *Bridges* during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting. **Fr Patrick McInerney** and **Ryan Epondulan** have been greeting our Muslim friends and enjoying *iftar* meals with them at the end of the day. We prepared an article explaining how Muslims observe Ramadan. We encouraged Christians to pray for Muslims at this time and to fast with them in solidarity. The article was published by the *Australasian Muslim Times*, by *Catholic Outlook* by the *ANZ Columban website*, and was posted on Facebook. You can read it at <https://goo.gl/ry8QWX>

Congratulations

A close-up image of a fountain pen nib, positioned at the end of the word 'Congratulations'.

Ryan Epondulan who graduated from the University of Sydney BA, BEd on 27/04/2018

Fr Patrick McInerney who celebrated his 40th anniversary of ordination on 26/05/2018

News From the World

Interfaith Centre of Melbourne Wins World Interfaith Prize

This year's *World Interfaith Harmony Week* prize was awarded to *Interfaith Centre of Melbourne* for the event 'Who and where are we in a Changing World?' Held at Melbourne's Federation Square, Indigenous, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Sikh faith leaders drew from literal, moral, symbolic and spiritual levels of understanding about our place in the Universe and the role of human beings in the natural world. Inspired by "love of neighbour", the event allowed community members to meet and to learn from each other about different faiths, philosophies and cultures. We extend congratulations.

See more: <https://goo.gl/73tWtN>; <http://goo.gl/5Gqpgf>



Several leaders of the Interfaith event –
Credit: The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne.

Suicide Attacks Contrary to Islam

On Sunday 13 May suicide bombers targeted three Christian churches in Surabaya, Indonesia. President Joko Widodo visiting the scene said, the "cowardly actions" of the attackers were "very barbaric and beyond the limit of humanity." Archbishop Robertus Rubiyatmoko said, "terrorists want to scare us, but we must remain calm and pray for God to convert their hearts." The attacks came just days after Muslim scholars issued an edict saying that violent extremism and terrorism, including suicide attacks, are against Islamic principles. See more: <https://goo.gl/TVyxMM>; <https://goo.gl/goPyno>; <https://goo.gl/BvTKVB>

Silver Jubilee of Global Ethic

Twenty-five years ago the *Parliament of the World's Religions* endorsed the *Declaration Towards a Global Ethic*, which had been drafted by Dr. Hans Küng. This document set the agenda for the interfaith movement that has blossomed around the world in the quarter-century since it was published. More than ever before, this Declaration deserves our attention and study because it states so clearly what humankind needs to survive in an increasingly threatened world.

See more: *Declaration (pdf)* is available at: <https://goo.gl/28nAaa>

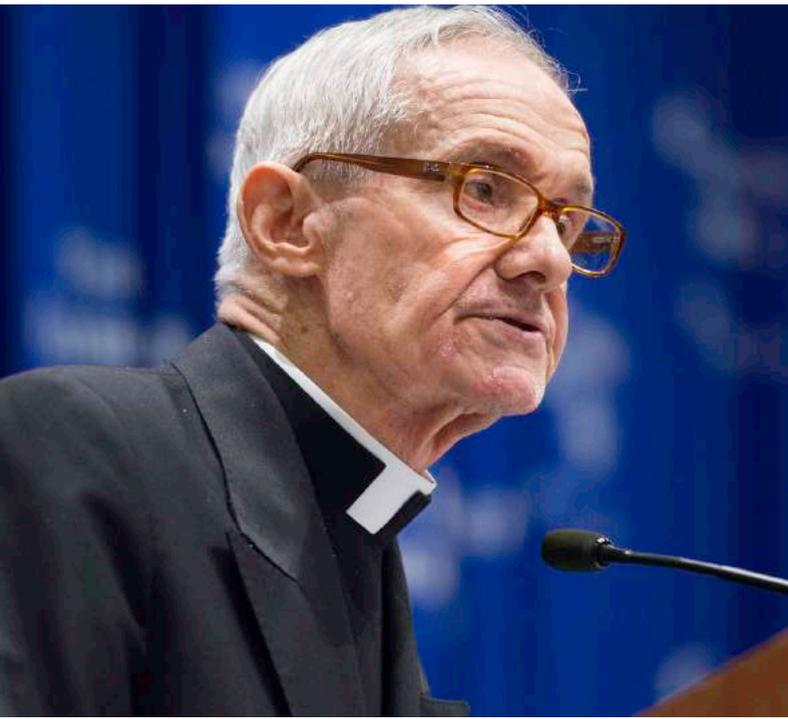
Current issue of TIO features articles on the origin and significance of the *Declaration*: <https://goo.gl/WoyJCo>

Catholics Join Muslims in Welcoming Ramadan

On 13 May one thousand Catholic and Muslim residents participated in the start of the "*Duyog Ramadan*" or "*One with Ramadan*" celebration in the southern Philippine city of Marawi. The program encourages Christian families "to sacrifice one meal" in any day of Ramadan and to donate the cost of the meal to the rehabilitation of Marawi communities. Reynaldo Barnido, executive secretary of *Duyog Marawi*, said the activity would not only be a symbolic gesture for Catholics but "a vow to accompany Muslims even in the hardest times." See more: <https://goo.gl/xGw6Qk>



Young Muslim and Christian residents of Marawi share food during the breaking of the fast. – Credit: Mark Saludes



Cardinal Tauran - Credit: Ed Pfueller Catholic University of America via CNS

A high-level delegation from the Vatican's *Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue* (PCID) made a week-long visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in April 2018. The delegation was led by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the PCID. They met King Salman bin Abdulaziz and visited Sheikh Mohammed Abdel Karim al-Issa, Secretary General of the *Muslim World League*. They also visited "*Etidal*", the *Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology*. The late King Abdulaziz had visited Pope Benedict XVI in the Vatican in 2007, becoming the first Saudi ruler to meet with a Pope. In return, Cardinal Tauran was the highest-ranking Vatican official to visit Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia is notorious for its ultra-conservative brand of Wahhabi Islam. It has used its oil wealth to spread this puritanical and intolerant ideology throughout the Muslim world. In the Kingdom, there has been strict implementation and police enforcement of Wahhabism. The public practice of all religions other than Islam is banned. Christians working there can neither build churches nor worship publicly.

In this ultra-conservative setting, the modernising Mohammed bin Salman, crown prince of Saudi Arabia, has been creating waves. He is attempting to wean the economy from its reliance on oil. He has liberalised society, reigning in the religious police, allowing cinemas to be opened again, and plans to let Saudi women drive cars. In London he visited the Archbishop of Canterbury; in New York he met Catholic and Jewish leaders; in Riyadh he has received the Patriarch of the Maronite Church.

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The Vatican delegation's visit sparked great interest. Some media outlets speculated that an agreement to build churches in Saudi Arabia had been reached! This has been officially denied by the Vatican. But from all reports, in his various meetings and speeches, the Cardinal did speak plainly in addressing interfaith issues:

On the Clash of Civilisations: "What is threatening all of us is not the clash of civilizations, but rather the clash of forms of ignorance and radicalism. What is threatening coexistence is first of all ignorance; therefore, to meet together, speak, build something together, are an invitation to encounter the other, and also means discovering ourselves."

On Fundamentalism: "In all religions there are forms of radicalism. Fundamentalists and extremists may be zealous persons, but unfortunately they have deviated from a solid and wise understanding of religion. Moreover, they consider those who do not share their vision as unbelievers who must convert or be eliminated, so as to maintain purity. They are misled persons who can easily go on to violence in the name of religion, including terrorism. They become convinced, through brainwashing, that they are serving God. The truth is that they are only hurting themselves, ruining the image of their religion and their coreligionists. This is why they need our prayer and our help."

On Interreligious Dialogue: "All authentic interreligious dialogue begins with the proclamation of one's own faith. We do not say that all religions are equal, but that all believers, those who seek God and all persons of good will devoid of religious affiliation, have equal dignity. Everyone must be left free to embrace the religion that he wishes." After this came the concluding appeal to join forces "so that God, who created us, may not be a motive of division, but rather of unity."

The Vatican and Saudi Arabia are central to Catholicism and Islam respectively. We hope this visit will bear fruit in greater mutual understanding and cooperation between Catholics and Muslims.

For the Cardinal's comments on opening the holy places to all, on the true meaning of martyrdom, [see: https://goo.gl/3grSyf](https://goo.gl/3grSyf)

For a detailed report on the Cardinal's visit and speeches [see: https://goo.gl/PYTpMM](https://goo.gl/PYTpMM)

For a report on the Cardinal's visit to the Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology, "*Etidal*", [see: https://goo.gl/cTJ1gN](https://goo.gl/cTJ1gN)

For recent Saudi efforts in promoting peace and tolerance [see: https://goo.gl/Vvknb8](https://goo.gl/Vvknb8)



Cardinal Tauran (left) is greeted by King Salman;
Photo Credit: SA Saudi Gazette.

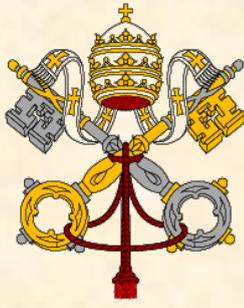
For background on the challenges that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman faces in modernizing the country in the face of the Saudi dynasty's compact with ultra-conservative Wahhabist ideology see: <https://goo.gl/u9adbx>

ON EQUAL TREATMENT AMONG ALL THE RELIGIONS

“All the religions must be treated in the same way, without discrimination, because their followers, together with the citizens who do not profess any religion, must be treated equally,” he remarked in referring to the always relevant theme of “full citizenship” for all. In part because “if we do not eliminate the double standards of our behaviour as believers, religious institutions and organizations, we will foster Islamophobia and Christianophobia.”

ON THE CONDEMNATION OF TERRORISM BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS

“Spiritual leaders have a duty: to keep the religions from being at the service of an ideology, and to be able to recognize that some of our coreligionists, like the terrorists, are not behaving correctly. Terrorism is a constant threat, and because of this we must be clear and never justify it. The forms of terrorism want to demonstrate the impossibility of coexistence. We believe the exact opposite. We must avoid aggression and denigration.”



PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

***MESSAGE FOR THE MONTH OF RAMADAN
AND 'ID AL-FITR***

1439 H. / 2018 A.D.

Christians and Muslims: From Competition to Collaboration

Dear Muslim Brothers and Sisters,

In his Providence, God the Almighty has granted you the opportunity to observe anew the fasting of Ramadan and to celebrate *'Id al-Fitr*.

The *Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue* appreciates the importance of this month and the great effort by the Muslims throughout the world to fast, pray and share the Almighty's gifts with the poor.

Mindful of the gifts prompted by Ramadan, we join you in thanking the Merciful God for his benevolence and generosity, and we extend to you our heartfelt best wishes.

The thoughts we would like to share with you on this occasion, dear Muslim brothers and sisters, concern a vital aspect of relations between Christians and Muslims: the need to move from competition to collaboration.

A spirit of competition has too often marked past relations between Christians and Muslims, the negative consequences of which are evident: jealousy, recriminations and tensions. In some cases, these have led to violent confrontations, especially where religion has been instrumentalized, above all due to self-interest and political motives.

Such interreligious competition wounds the image of religions and their followers, and it fosters the view that religions are not sources of peace, but of tension and violence.

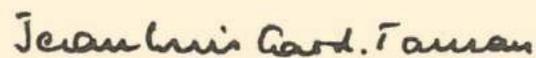
To prevent and overcome these negative consequences, it is important that we Christians and Muslims recall the religious and moral values that we share, while acknowledging our differences. By recognizing what we hold in common and by showing respect for our legitimate differences, we can more firmly establish a solid foundation for peaceful relations, moving from competition and confrontation to an effective cooperation for the common good. This particularly assists those most in need, and allows us to offer a credible witness to the Almighty's love for the whole of humanity.

We all have the right and the duty to witness to the All-Powerful One we worship, and to share our beliefs with others, while respecting their religion and religious sentiments.

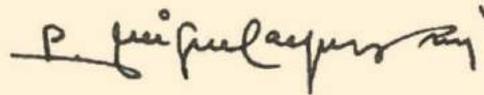
So that we may further peaceful and fraternal relations, let us work together and honor each another. In this way we will give glory to the Almighty and promote harmony in society, which is becoming increasingly multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural.

We conclude by renewing our best wishes for a fruitful fast and a joyful 'Id, and assure you of our solidarity in prayer.

From the Vatican, 20 April 2018



Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran
President



+ Bishop Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, M.C.C.I.
Secretary

To make it easy to share this Eid Message with Muslim friends and colleagues, the Centre has prepared pdf files which can be attached to e-mails or downloaded and printed for distribution. The files are available on our Centre's page on the ANZ Columban website.

The English text is available at <https://goo.gl/ipNfmY>

The Arabic text is available at <https://goo.gl/HWJnnw>

Feature

Dialogue continues to be contested in the church. It is caricatured as naive, reductive and even a betrayal of mission. Here are condensed excerpts from two articles that address these challenges. Editor.



Pope Francis visiting the Temple Mount and meeting the Muslim clerics and Catholic cardinals, Jordan's Prince Ghazi, chief adviser to the king for religious and cultural affairs. Photo: bigstock.com

Responding to the Challenges to Dialogue

Pope Francis has consistently drawn attention to the central importance of dialogue for the church. In his 2013 apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, the pope urged us to walk along “the path of dialogue”, enumerating various ways in which the church and individual Christians can embark on this path. In his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis argued that genuine dialogue must be at the heart of our efforts to address ecological devastation.

What Pope Francis means by dialogue was made clear during his visit to the USA in 2015. He told the bishops to “dialogue fearlessly.” He pressed them to be unafraid to articulate their viewpoints boldly and clearly, but to do so from a position of genuine encounter. Such encounter mean that we affirm others first as persons, “to realize deep down that the brother or sister we wish to reach and redeem, with the power and the closeness of love, counts more than their positions, distant as they may be from what we hold as true and certain. Harsh and divisive language do little else but alienate and only the enduring allure of goodness and love remains truly convincing,” said Pope Francis.

For full article by Gregory Hillis in the 02/04/18 issue of America Magazine see: <https://goo.gl/64s1Ja>

Dialogue between Christians and Muslims?

Dialogue - particularly with Muslims - has been dubbed naïve and accused of being a form of giving up one's mission. Some speak loosely of “evangelisation of Muslims”. However, for theologians, dialogue and proclamation are not opposed.

Nostra Aetate of the Second Vatican Council, just like the document signed in 1991 by the *Pontifical Council for interreligious Dialogue* and the *Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples*, stresses respect for other believers and “for what is true and holy in (their) religions”, along with “fidelity to the mission of announcing the Gospel.”

“The question that needs to be reflected on is not ‘should we evangelize or not?’ but rather, ‘what does evangelization consist of?’” said Father Henri-Jérôme Gagey, Vicar General of the *Diocese of Créteil* and former dean of the *Theologicum of the Catholic Institute of Paris*.

“From this point of view, we have not finished meditating on the *Evangelii Gaudium* exhortation in which Pope Francis insisted on the fact that Jesus Christ, the first evangelizer, always begins by establishing a relationship of welcome and goodwill with those he meets.”

If it's a conversion that the Christian needs to seek, for himself or for the other, it's first that of the heart, he points out.

“Through dialogue, a Muslim can know conversion, if his heart is more peaceful, more just, more capable of giving... even if it is not explicit,” said Fr Gagey. “And I, too, through the encounter, I can become more Christian. The rest belongs to God.”

For the full article by Anne-Bénédicte Hoffner in the 19/05/18 issue of La Croix - see: <https://goo.gl/BzN136>

So That You Might Know One Another

Rev Dr Patrick McInerney spoke at the launch on 19 April of “So that you might know each other”, an exhibition on Islamic faith and culture at the *National Museum of Australia* in Canberra. The name of the exhibition is taken from the verb, لَتَعَارَفُوا *lata‘ārifū* “that you might know each other” from verse 39 of *Surah Al-Hujurat* (The Dwellings) in the Holy Quran (49:13):

O people! Behold, We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might know each other.

The exhibition is a collaboration between the Vatican *Anima Mundi* Museums, the *Sharjah Museums* and the *National Museum of Australia*. It showcases over one hundred items of cultural and religious interest from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Australia. The exhibition provides a window into the world of Islam and the beauty of Islamic arts and culture. It is a wonderful way to learn about Islam and Muslims. The items are clearly labelled and explained. The guide book is a treasure-house of information.

I strongly recommend a visit to Canberra to see this exhibition. It is especially useful for students and teachers of Studies of Religion and for those concerned about interfaith and communal relations. The exhibition truly lives up to its name, as it provides a unique opportunity for Australians of all walks of life to get to know their Muslim neighbours.

For Fr Patrick’s report on the launch see: <https://goo.gl/Ta14ZK>

For photos of items in the exhibition see: <https://goo.gl/f2Cnx5>



Katherine Aigner, Associate Curator, Vatican Anima Mundi Museum, and Carol Cooper, Senior Curator, National Museum of Australia, have provided a detailed account of the origins and contents of the Exhibition in “Faith, Tradition and Culture”. The article is available on our Centre’s webpage at <https://goo.gl/HHrisi>



ABRAHAM CONFERENCE

Pillars of Peace

Jews, Christians & Muslims
working together

DISCOVER WHAT WORKS AND WHAT WE
CAN DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Sunday 5th August 2018

2.00pm to 5:30pm

Registration from 1.00pm

Level 9, Peter Shergold building

Western Sydney University

169 Macquarie Street

Parramatta NSW 2145



Register at EventBrite:

<https://2018abrahamconference.eventbrite.com.au>

\$20 (Concession \$10)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Steven Killelea AM

Founder Institute for Economics and Peace and the
Global Peace index

Moderator:

Professor Kevin Dunn

Dean of School of Social Sciences and Psychology WSU





YOUTH POWR

PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

HARMONY FOR HUMANITY

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

SUNDAY 19TH AUGUST | 2:00PM – 5:00PM

SGI AUSTRALIA

3 PARKVIEW DR, SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK

FOOD WILL BE PROVIDED

**\$10
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YouthPoWR

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ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

Youth PoWR is an initiative of the *Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations*. Funding has been provided by the *Glenburnie Program*, the *NSW Government* through *Multicultural NSW* and the *St Columban's Mission Society*.

What's coming up

- 29 June:** Centenary of the founding of the *Missionary Society of Saint Columban*
- 28 July:** *Women of Diversity Dinner*, The Himalaya Emporium Function Centre, 258 South Terrace, Bankstown NSW. - <https://goo.gl/FQAna4>
- 29-30 July:** *JCMA Winter Conference*, Don Bosco Retreat Centre, Lysterfield, Victoria
- 5 August:** *Abraham Conference*, Western Sydney University, 169 Macquarie Street, Parramatta NSW (see flyer p. 10)
- 6 August:** Feast of the Transfiguration (Christian)
- 19 August:** *Youth PoWR* (Parliament of the World's Religions), SGI Australia, 3 Parkview Drive, Sydney Olympic Park NSW (see flyer p. 11)



15 August: Assumption/Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Catholic Christian)

21 August: *Eid al-Adha* (Feast of Sacrifice) (Muslim) Culmination of the *Hajj* (Pilgrimage to Mecca); commemorates Abraham's faith, shown in his willingness to sacrifice his son

8 September: Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Christian)

12 September: *Hijra* (Muslim) Start of New Year

21 September: *Ashura* (Muslim) Commemoration of Karbala & Martyrdom of Imam Hussain.



COLUMBAN CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

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