



# Bridges

Building relationships between Christians and Muslims



No. 86 March 2020

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IMAGE BY 'INK SKETCHER' – HAMMAD HAIDER; COMMISSIONED BY HUMANS UNITE FOR AN EVENT TO MARK THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHRISTCHURCH ATTACKS – PUBLISHED WITH PERMISSION.



## CHRISTCHURCH REMEMBERED

### From the Editor

Last month we commemorated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, remembering all those murdered in the Holocaust. This month and next, we remember the victims of the terrorist attacks in the mosques in Christchurch and the churches in Sri Lanka.

Our cover image is the Māori greeting, the *hongi*, two people rubbing noses together. This traditional gesture shows that we breathe the same air, share the same spirit, and are united – in grief, in joy, in humanity, in sharing planet earth, in faith in God.

This image is particularly poignant. The details in the design are the names in Arabic script of the 51 people killed in the Christchurch mosques. The dark green in the woman's shawl – the Arabic words for peace, love and unity – form the map of New Zealand. Above and below the entrance doors of the mosque, as if in welcome, is

the Arabic greeting *Salaam* (Peace), repeated three times; the dome of the mosque has the Arabic word for "Unity" four times; and central to the minaret pointing towards God is the Arabic word for "Love".

We remember all the names of the dead in Christchurch, in Sri Lanka, and in other terrorist attacks. We remember all the victims, everywhere. They are us. They should have been safe. We commit, never again! No more hate speech. No more divisiveness. No more "us" and "them". We are one; one humanity; one common home, planet earth; one creation; one Creator. We must live in peace, love and unity.

I conclude with words adapted from John Donne's, *No Man is an Island*: 'Each one's death diminishes me, For I am involved in humankind. Therefore, send not to know For whom the bell tolls, It tolls for thee.'

REV DR PATRICK MCINERNEY



### Attending the Divine Steps Festival

**Fr Patrick McNerney** and **Ryan Epondulan** attended the Divine Steps Festival, a Sikh event celebrating the 550<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, late last year. To get into the spirit of the event, Patrick volunteered to be dressed in a 'Columban blue' turban for the day (pictured). It is customary in the Sikh faith to serve free food to others, no matter your cultural or religious background, and at this event food was served to hundreds of attendees. They also received free medical checks. Representatives of different religious groups also

participated in the event, sharing their musical talents and hosting information stalls to help deliver a better understanding of their religions. It was a great opportunity for our Centre to present on our latest interfaith initiative, *The Sydney Statement* (see an update on the *Statement* at the bottom of this page).



### Prayers for rain

**Fr Patrick McNerney** joined with Muslims in prayers for rain during a visit to Adelaide in January. His friend, Professor Mohamad Abdalla, preached on the need for repentance for human failures and reliance on God who is Merciful Provider. Fr Patrick posted the story on Facebook, where it received more than 500 likes and was shared nearly 350 times. Newspapers in Dubai, India, Pakistan and the UK picked up the good news story and spread it through their syndicates. One newspaper, thinking that Muslims can't possibly do any good, completely reversed the story. Their headline read, 'Australian Muslims join Christians in prayer for rain'. The reality was the very opposite. The event was entirely a Muslim initiative. The congregation was entirely Muslim. One solitary Christian stood on the sideline and joined with the Muslims in their prayer for rain. It rained the next day!



Last year Youth PoWR conducted four consultations to create content for *The Sydney Statement* (TSS). We are currently drafting the text and will do further consultations and drafts in the coming months. We hope that Youth PoWR will approve the final text mid-year and authorise publication, after which we will promote TSS far and wide. Follow developments on Facebook at [/TheSydneyStatement](#) or [/YouthPoWR](#).

### Fr Patrick receives peace award

In December, the Indian Crescent Society of Australia (ICSOA) held an interfaith event at the NSW Parliament. Eleven speakers, including **Rev Dr Patrick McInerney**, addressed the topic, "The Place of Interfaith Dialogue in a Culturally Diversified Australian Context". After thanking the speakers, Mr Abbas Raza Alvi, the President of ICSOA, announced the inauguration of a new award. He declared that the 2019 recipient of the ICSOA Interfaith Peace Award was Fr Patrick. The announcement completely surprised Fr Patrick, who was genuinely moved by this gesture of acknowledgement and appreciation. Rev Dr Shenouda Mansour, a Coptic Orthodox priest who is General Secretary of the NSW Ecumenical Council and a great supporter of interfaith, presented the award.



### Women in interfaith

**Kim Chong** was invited to participate in two long-standing women's interfaith groups in recent months, as member of the Women's Interfaith Network (WIN), and as guest speaker at the Pan Pacific South East Asian Women's Association (PPSEAWA). WIN (pictured) has gathered monthly for more than 20 years and currently meets at the Parliament of NSW. The women promote mutual understanding among followers of the world's religions. So far Kim has learned about the feasts and festivities

of the Bahá'í, Christian and Muslim religions. PPSEAWA is the only international women's organisation devoted to families, peace and understanding in the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Kim presented on her interreligious journey and her role at the Centre to the President and Executive Committee.

### Catching up with Muslim friends

The Grand Mufti of Australia, Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed, welcomed guests of different faiths, and government and non-profit organisations, to a Season's Greetings barbecue at the Australian National Imam's Council in Chullora leading up to Christmas. And the Centre's **Ryan Epondulan** was among them. The lunch was a gesture of thanks to those who had collaborated with the Australian National Imams Council to foster greater interfaith and civic relations in Australia. Later, youth of United Muslims of Australia (pictured with Ryan) hosted an open door event, asking: "Who is Jesus?" Although Muslims believe Jesus was a prophet, while Christians believe him as the son of God, Ryan found it interesting to hear about the significance of Jesus to both religions. It was a great way for Ryan to reconnect, make new friends and share ideas on how to collaborate with our Muslim friends.



### Philippines celebrate 2020 as year of dialogue and human fraternity

The Catholic Church in the Philippines has declared 2020 as the Year of Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue and Indigenous Peoples, in the spirit of the *Document on Human Fraternity*, co-signed in Abu Dhabi last year by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb. Speaking to *AsiaNews*, Fr Sebastiano D'Ambra of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME), who serves as the executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines on Interreligious Dialogue, says the *Document* was given to all the dioceses of the country as a point of study and education as they prepare for 500 years of Christianity in the country in 2021. Condensed and adapted from <https://bit.ly/2OG2Uu1>.



### New manual on Islam

Why do some young Muslims go astray? Because they follow the wrong information about Islam found on the Internet. Congratulations to the Board of Imams Victoria who have published a handy 12-page manual entitled *An Introductory Resource Manual: Islam and Living in Australia*. Aimed at Muslims and others, it debunks misconceptions about Islam. It provides an introduction to Islam and treats sensitive issues such as family, violence, multiculturalism, volunteering and religious observance in public spaces. The manual was developed with the support of the Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF) and is available at <http://bit.ly/2Oy2gig>.

For commentary on the manual see <http://bit.ly/3bhFTqV>.



Co-signatories of the Statement celebrate a commitment to interfaith relations. Pictured from left are Professor Hayden Ramsay, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Coordination ACU; Sheikh Shafiq Abdullah Khan, Chair, Australian Islamic Cultural Centre; Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed, Grand Mufti of Australia; and Bishop Michael McKenna, Chair, Australian Catholic Bishops Commission for Christian Unity and Inter-religious Dialogue.

### *Document on Human Fraternity* turns one

On 4 February, the CCCMR team attended the Australian Catholic Bishops Commission for Christian Unity and Inter-religious Dialogue's celebration of the first-year anniversary of the signing of the *Document on Human Fraternity*. Central to the event, held at ACU's North Sydney campus, was a joint declaration to commit to the principles in the *Document*, expressed through a statement specially developed by the Commission. Called *A Christian-Muslim Interfaith Commitment Statement*, it promises to uphold the freedoms of citizenship and belief; to recognise human beings as brothers and sisters; and to commit to the "reconciliation and fraternity between all believers, non-believers, and all people of good will", among others. The *Statement* also included a message from Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.



## Australia Day 2020 honours

Congratulations to all who were rightly recognised in the Australia Day 2020 Honours List.

We acknowledge in particular friends of the Centre (pictured from top left):

- **Professor Mohamad Abdalla AM:** for significant service to education in the field of Islamic studies.
- **Dr Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad OAM:** for service to the Muslim community, and to interfaith relations.
- **Rabbi Zalman Kastel AM:** for significant service to interfaith and intercultural understanding and acceptance.
- **The late Jeremy Spinak AM:** for significant service to the Jewish community, to multicultural relations and to interfaith relations.

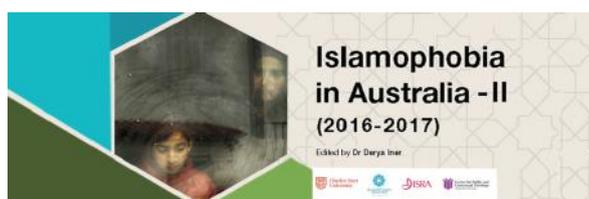
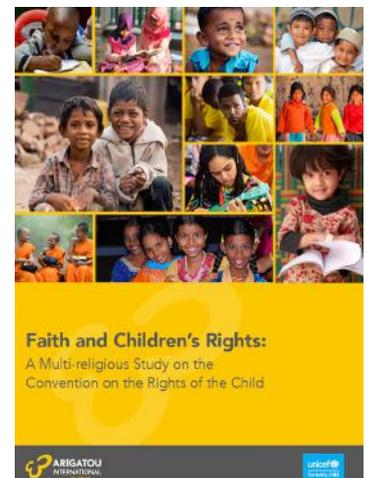
We look forward to continuing collaboration. We acknowledge also:

- **Rabbi Dr Jeffrey Cohen OAM:** for service to community health, and to interfaith organisations.
- **Mr Ian Russell Green OAM:** for service to Buddhism, and to interfaith relations.

It is encouraging that five Muslims were recognised for various services to the community, and that contributions to interfaith is one of the criteria for recognition.

## Multi-religious study for children's rights released

The first ever multi-religious global study focusing on the role of religious leaders and religious communities in promoting children's rights was launched in Geneva late last year to honor the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The study, *Faith and Children's Rights*, was developed by Arigatou International in collaboration with several partner organisations and advocates, and provides perspectives from seven religious traditions: the Bahá'í faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. The study is intended as a resource to support the efforts of religious leaders and religious communities to expand their advocacy and action, mobilise new partners and further engage their own faith communities to protect children from violence and promote their healthy development. The study is available at <https://bit.ly/2uxBkbH>. Condensed and adapted from <https://bit.ly/2UxZAEU>.



The *Islamophobia in Australia - II (2016-2017)* report, led by Dr Derya Iner from Charles Sturt University's Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation, is now available. The report is an analysis of verified incidents reported to the Islamophobia Register Australia during 2016-17. Access the report at: [https://www.isra.org.au/site/user-assets/Islamophobia%20in%20Australia%20II%20-%202016-2017%20\(2019%20Publication\)20191126073923.pdf](https://www.isra.org.au/site/user-assets/Islamophobia%20in%20Australia%20II%20-%202016-2017%20(2019%20Publication)20191126073923.pdf)

# Interfaith charter released: the *New Alliance of Virtue*

Abu Dhabi Forum launches new interfaith charter comparable to the 13th-century *Magna Carta* in scope and potential influence

By Rev Dr Patrick McInerney

I was privileged to attend the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies in Abu Dhabi from 9-11 December 2019. The Forum brought together more than 500 religious and civic leaders from around the world. They were mostly Muslim, but there were also Christian and Jewish leaders from various denominations, and some Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh leaders.

The Forum is an initiative of [Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah](#), a distinguished Sunni scholar who is recognised as the world authority in Islamic jurisprudence. He is president of the United Arab Emirates Fatwa Council and an ardent proponent of interfaith relations. The theme of the Forum was "The Role of Religions in Promoting Tolerance: From Possibility to Necessity".

The highlight of the Forum was the launch of a new international, interfaith charter, the [New Alliance of Virtue](#). It is the culmination of a series of faith and interfaith conferences organised by Sheikh bin Bayyah:

1. The January 2016 [Marrakesh Declaration](#) came out of a conference of Muslim scholars who established a legal framework from *shari'a*, or Islamic law, on the rights of religious minorities in Muslim-majority lands based on equal citizenship.
2. The December 2018 [Washington Declaration](#) turned the focus outwards from Muslim scholars only to leaders from all the Abrahamic Religions. It invited them to make a joint commitment to work for the common good.

## CHARTER OF THE NEW ALLIANCE OF VIRTUE



3. The December 2019 [New Alliance of Virtue](#) is a refined version of the *Washington Declaration*. Like its predecessor, it is framed from the perspective of the Abrahamic religions, but widens the scope even further and reaches out to all peoples. Interfaith experts from all the three religions were consulted. The text has been rigorously edited. The language is precise and magisterial. It is an inspirational document.

The name, "Alliance of Virtue", derives from an incident in late 7<sup>th</sup> century pre-Islamic Mecca. A Yemeni merchant who had been defrauded by one of the wealthy Meccan oligarchs appealed to the Meccans for justice. In response, some of the Meccan merchants came together and committed to act collectively that no one among them, whether local or stranger, especially one who had no connections to power, would be treated unjustly. The pact was called the *Hilf al-Fudul* (the Alliance of Virtue). Muhammad ibn Abdallah, who was a young man at the time, witnessed the forging of this alliance, of which the Hashemite tribe to which he belonged was a party. Hadith literature – traditions about the Prophet Muhammad – relate that in his later life, after the call to prophethood:

“The Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said, ‘I witnessed a pact of justice in the house of Abdullah ibn Jud’an that was more beloved to me than a herd of expensive red camels. If I were called to it now in the time of Islam, I would respond.’” (Sunan Al-Kubra 12114)

The salient point here is that the Alliance of Virtue was forged in the time before Islam so is not a “Muslim” or “Islamic” agreement as such; but in the hadith quoted above, it is approved and endorsed by the Prophet of Islam such that the values contained in it are binding on Muslims. In other words, the ancient Alliance of Virtue was for non-Muslims and Muslims alike. In a similar way, the *New Alliance of Virtue*, is for Muslims, for believers in other world religions, and for secular and humanist worldviews. It is all-inclusive.

Rev Robert Sellers, a Baptist Minister from the USA and former chair of the board of the Parliament of the World’s Religions, described the significance of the *New Alliance of Virtue* as follows:

"The charter, which in my view is similar in scope and potential influence to the 13th-century *Magna Carta*, is grounded upon the principles of 'human dignity, freedom of conscience and religion or belief, tolerance, justice, peace, mercy, kindness, keeping covenants, and solidarity'" (<http://bit.ly/2S4TVVo>).

The *New Alliance of Virtue* merits consideration and implementation by believers from all religions and belief systems in every country. At the [Abrahamic Faiths Initiative](#) group, where 25 religious leaders representing millions of Christian, Muslim and Jewish faithful met at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome on 14-16 January this year to discuss practical ways of promoting peace and fraternity, Sheikh Bin Bayyah presented a copy of the *New Alliance of Virtue* to His Holiness, Pope Francis. The Charter complements the [Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together](#) that was signed in Abu Dhabi one year previously by Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar University.

I commend the *Charter of The New Alliance of Virtue* to your prayerful reading and action. I was privileged to endorse the document at its launch at the Forum and invite you to do the same by clicking on the link at <https://www.allianceofvirtues.com/english/Charter.asp>. I will be promoting the *Charter* in our interfaith work at the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations and encourage you also to share it around your personal and professional networks.

**N.B.** The *Marrakesh Document* and the *Washington Declaration* were part of the inspiration and research for *The Sydney Statement*. The *New Alliance of Virtue* provides the international framework for our local charter. It sets a high bar, which we hope to attain.



*Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah, a distinguished Sunni scholar and president of the United Arab Emirates Fatwa Council, presents the Charter of the New Alliance of Virtue for global peace to His Holiness Pope Francis at his residence at the Vatican.*

## Document on Human Fraternity guides UN resolution

The *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, co-signed in Abu Dhabi by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, in February last year, is holding up as a leading guide in the development of UN-sanctioned resolutions that call for interreligious and intercultural dialogue for world peace and stability.

In December 2019, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) looked to the *Document*, as well as the *Appeal for Peace* statement, signed by religious leaders during the World Day of Prayer for Peace in September 2016, during its adoption of a significant resolution, entitled *Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace*. The resolution was initiated by Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation and Thailand. Content of the resolution was so well negotiated, according to Ioan Voicu, who reported on the resolution for *On Line Opinion*, that 56 other countries decided to become cosponsors, including the UAE, Vietnam, China, Indonesia, Japan, Ireland, Peru and Turkey.

According to the most recent UN estimates, the current world population is 7.8 billion, of which 84 per cent are religious adherents. In recent years, a quarter of the world's countries have experienced a high incidence of conflicts or hostilities motivated by religious intolerance, mob violence related to religion, terrorism, and harassment of people for violating religious codes, say Pew estimates. With the international community experiencing a growing trend of xenophobia and religious intolerance, the resolution was described as more relevant than ever, stating that "interreligious dialogue through engagement of faith leaders, civil society and academia is important for building intellectual and moral solidarity, [and that] meaningful dialogue across cultural and religious identities is [...] a daily reality at the grassroots level".

It was within this context that the UNGA noted the principles of the *Document on Human Fraternity* and thereby reaffirmed that "mutual understanding and interreligious and intercultural dialogue constitute important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and of the culture of peace".



Pope Francis addresses Christian leaders and leaders of other religions at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University.

The UNGA then called upon "Member States to consider, as appropriate and where applicable, interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an important tool in efforts aimed at achieving peace and social stability and the full realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals".

The need for different religions to encounter one another in mutual respect for peace and stability is one of the most pressing messages that Pope Francis has shared during his apostolic journey throughout the world in the last year. Addressing some 1500 people representing Buddhism, Brahma-Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism, at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University just last November, for example, Pope Francis said:

"Our world faces [...] the tragic persistence of civil conflicts resulting in movements of migration, refugees, famine and war. These challenges remind us that no region or sector of the human family can look to itself or its future in isolation from, or immune to, others. [...] Now is the time to be bold and envision the logic of encounter and mutual dialogue as the path, common cooperation as the code of conduct, and reciprocal knowledge as a method and standard."

The latter part of the pope's message is anchored in the *Document* and now shares with the UNGA's efforts in multilateral diplomacy the principles essential to a creative interfaith dialogue based on honesty and truth, with the aim of fostering greater fraternal solidarity within the global community. *Condensed and adapted from 'Interreligious Dialogue and Multilateral Diplomacy', by Ioan Voicu, On Line Opinion, <https://bit.ly/2uH4PaX>; and 'Pope Calls for Mutual Respect, Esteem, Cooperation Among Religions', by Jim Fair, Zenit, <https://bit.ly/2UQqwjg>.*

# Christians and Muslims: Serving Humanity Together

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and the Centre for Interreligious & Intercultural Dialogue (CIID) of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) held their Eleventh Colloquium on 11-12 November 2019 in Tehran, Iran. The focus of the conference was "Christians and Muslims: Serving Humanity Together", from the viewpoints of Shia Islam and Catholicism.

The delegation comprised 11 Muslim representatives and 10 Catholic representatives (among whom was Rev Dr Diego Sarrió-Cucarella, the keynote speaker for the [Abraham Conference](#) in Sydney last year, which the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations co-hosts with interfaith partners).

In the inaugural session, in addition to the opening remarks by His Excellency Dr Abuzar Ibrahim Turkaman, president of ICRO, and His Eminence Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, president of the PCID, a talk was given by Ayatollah Abolghasem Alidoust Abarghouei, faculty member of the Islamic Research Institute for Culture and Thought on "Human Fraternity". Following this session, papers were presented on the following subthemes:

- Promoting individual rights and duties: Muslim and Christian Perspectives
- Serving together the family and the education of the youth: Christian and Muslim Perspectives
- Serving together in society: Muslim and Christian Perspectives
- Serving together in the international community: Christian and Muslim Perspectives

At the end of the meeting, participants had generated the following six points of common agreement that they would commit to together:

1. Service to others, especially the sick, the poor and the needy, is of capital importance to Christians and Muslims. In addition, serving others witnesses to the universal love of God for all human beings, because He created everyone and everything, and cares for all His creation with the same love.
2. Service to humanity requires treatment of all human beings without discrimination across the world. All individuals, all communities and



From front left: Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, Dr. Abuzar Ibrahim Turkaman and Ayatollah Abolghasem Alidoust Abarghouei.

all nations should be treated with a sense of humanity, including in situations of war or under international sanctions.

3. Muslims and Christians, along with all persons of goodwill who do not profess any particular religion, are called to promote fundamental human rights for everybody, everywhere, at all times. Freedom of conscience and of religion is the cornerstone of the edifice of human rights and therefore should be persevered and promoted.
4. Duties are inseparable from rights. Therefore, every person and group, while defending their rights, should also do their best to fulfill their duties towards their families, communities, and societies.
5. The formation of young people as both sincere believers and responsible citizens is of essential importance for religions and states alike. It is on families that the primary responsibility for this formation of young people falls; they thus have the right to be supported in this responsibility by the whole of society.
6. A particular and urgent service to humanity today is the custody of creation, taking into consideration in particular climate change and the environmental crisis. This endeavor requires the collaboration of all believers and people of goodwill.

The PCID expressed profound gratitude to the CIID and to the ICRO for their warm welcome and generous hospitality. The participants decided to hold the next colloquium in Rome in 2021, to be preceded by a preparatory meeting in 2020. *Condensed and adapted from 'Statement by Center for Interreligious & Intercultural Dialogue of Islamic Culture and Relations Organization and Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue', Zenit, <https://bit.ly/2vtrkzW>.*

## St Paul an example for creating bridges to dialogue

Christians who preach the Gospel must see people who do not know Christ as children of God and not as nonbelievers worthy of hostility and contempt, Pope Francis said.

The example of St Paul's mission in Greece and his encounter with the pagan culture there serves as a reminder that Christians should "create a bridge to dialogue" with other cultures, the pope said on 6 November 2019 during his weekly general audience.

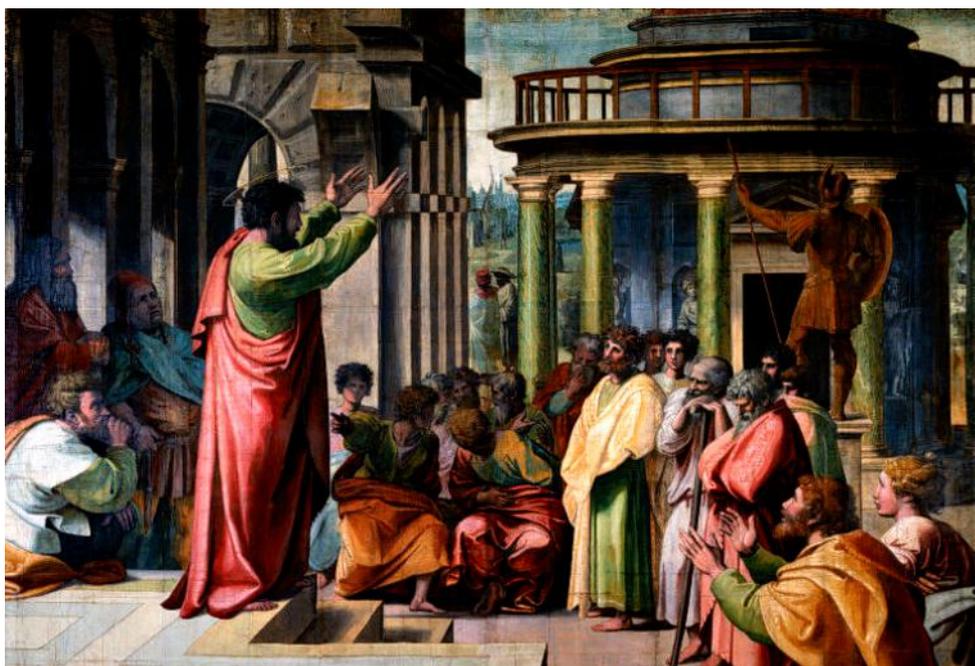
"Paul does not look at the city of Athens and the pagan world with hostility but with the eyes of faith," he said. "And this makes us question our way of looking at our cities: Do we observe them with indifference? With contempt? Or with the faith that recognises children of God in the midst of the anonymous crowds?"

Continuing his series of talks on the Acts of the Apostles, the pope focused on St Paul's visit to Athens, a city that "still held the primacy of culture" and was "full of idols".

Acts 17:16-34 recounts that St Paul preached to the Athenians at the Areopagus, an area that was not only a symbol of Greek political and cultural life but also the location of an altar to the "unknown god".

The paganism of the Greeks did not cause the apostle to flee, the pope explained. Instead, "Paul observes the culture and environment of Athens from a contemplative gaze that sees God dwelling in their homes, in their streets and squares."

"In the heart of one of the most famous institutions of the ancient world, the Areopagus, he realises an extraordinary example of inculturation of the message of the faith," the pope said. "He proclaims Jesus Christ to idol worshippers and doesn't do it by attacking them, but by making himself a 'pontiff', a builder of bridges."



*Saint Paul delivering the Areopagus Sermon in Athens, by Raphael, 1515.*

The apostle, he continued, "takes his cue from the altar of the city dedicated to the unknown god" and engages with the Athenians with "empathy", declaring that he is preaching in the name of the one they "worship without knowing it".

Citing Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis said that in doing so, St Paul is not proclaiming the unknown god but rather "proclaiming him whom men do not know and yet do know — the unknown-known".

In this way, St Paul can announce the message of salvation, "the kerygma", by alluding "to Christ without citing him, defining him as the man whom God has chosen", he said.

Pope Francis concluded his talk by asking Christians to ask the Holy Spirit to "teach us to build bridges with culture, with those who do not believe or with those who have a different creed from ours".

"Let us ask him for the capacity to delicately inculturate the message of faith, placing a contemplative gaze on those who are ignorant of Christ, moved by a love that warms even the most hardened hearts," the pope said.

*Condensed and adapted from 'Dialogue begins with empathy, not contempt, pope says', by Junno Arocho Esteves, Catholic News Service, <https://bit.ly/37icqdj>.*

# Coming Events

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>			

## February 2020

**24 February-10 March** Holy Great Fast (Coptic Christian)

**26** Ash Wednesday – Lenten fast begins (Catholic Christian)

## March 2020

**02** Clean Monday – Great Lent begins (Orthodox Christian)

**08** International Women’s Day, <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>

**15** First Anniversary of Attack on Christchurch Mosques

**21** Harmony Day, <https://www.harmony.gov.au/about> **AND**  
International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, <http://bit.ly/3brkWda>

**22** *Al-Isra’ w’al-Miraj* – The Night Journey and Ascent (of Prophet Muhammad) (Islam)

**25** Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Christian)

**28** NSW Premier’s Harmony Dinner, <http://bit.ly/39B3uRZ>

## April 2020

**05** Palm Sunday (Christian)

**09** *Lailat al-Bara’ah* – The Night of Records/Forgiveness (Islam)

**10** Good Friday – Crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Christian)

**12** Easter Sunday – Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Christian) **AND** Palm Sunday (Coptic/Orthodox Christian)

**17** Good Friday (Coptic/Orthodox Christian)

**19** *Pascha* – Easter (Coptic/Orthodox Christian)

**21** First Anniversary of Sri Lankan Church Bombings

**24 April-23 May** Ramadan fast (TBC) (Islam)

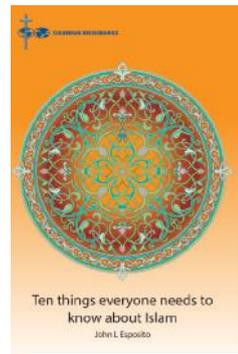


# Bridges

Building relationships between Christians and Muslims

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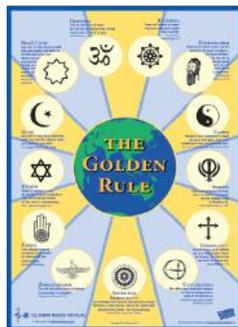
## Columban Resources



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- **PROVIDES** basic information about Islam for schools, homes and offices.
- **ENABLES** better understanding of the beliefs and practice of Muslims.

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