



ACADEMY for
CULTURAL DIPLOMACY



International Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy & Religion

*“The Promotion of World Peace through
Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths”*

(Rome; March 31st - April 3rd, 2014)

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Introduction



The International Symposium on Religion & Cultural Diplomacy focused on "The Promotion of World Peace through Interfaith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths" and highlighted the importance of religious interchange as a vehicle for World Peace. The potential role religion plays in the promotion of global peace and stability has been outlined, with the aim to exemplify the positive and demonstrative effect it can bear in impacting society.

Religion can be used as a major force of unification between divergent factions; through the analysis and promotion of inter-faith dialogue, the Symposium has illustrated the key role religion plays in facilitating mutual understanding and tolerance of varying spiritual affiliations. The overall objective of the Symposium was to demonstrate how inter-faith dialogue can be used as an effective tool in promoting global peace and reconciliation, and the power of religion to bring varying groups together in order to establish and maintain constructive channels of communication and sustainable collaboration.



Conference Timetable

Monday, March 31st, 2014

La Società Italiana per l'Organizzazione Internazionale (SIOI)

14.00 Welcome Address

The Hon. Halldór Ásgrímsson

Master Jun Hong Lu

14.30 "Cultural Diplomacy and the Unity of Faiths"

MP Marta Grande

15.00 "Religious Communities, Dialogue and Conflict Resolution"

President Stjepan Mesić

15.30 Lecture & Discussion

The Hon. Franco Frattini

16.30 "Living Together with Diversity is the Only Way Forward"

Dr. Paul Jacob Bhatti

17.00 "Dialogue: An Essential Key to Cultural Diplomacy and Religion"

Claudia Bandion-Ortner

17.30 Lecture & Discussion

Bishop Fülöp Kocsis

18.00 "Islam's View of Religious Tolerance & Coexistence"

Mufti Ikram ul Haq

Conference Timetable

Tuesday, April 1st, 2014

10:00 - 13:00 Italian Senate

14:00 - 18:00 SIOI

10.00 Lecture & Discussion

Senator Lucio Malan

10.30 "Recommendations for World Peace: How to Achieve Peace among Religions?"

Man Hee Lee

11.00 "The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"

Master Jun Hong Lu

11.30 "The Religion in the Mediterranean Area"

MP Sandro Gozi

12.00 "Education as a Key Policy for Inter-Faith Dialogue"

Senator Linda Lanzillotta

12.30 "Peace and Dialogue among Civilizations"

President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

14.00 "Cultural Diplomacy and Religions Today in Europe"

The Hon. Erhard BusekSpeakers

14.30 "Austrian Initiatives in the Field of Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue"

MP Reinhold Lopatka

15.00 "The Future has the Flavor of the Past"

Senator Mihai Razvan Ungureanu

15.30 "The Role of Religious Communities in Peace Promotion -Bosnian Model"

His Eminence Husein ef. Kavazovic

16.30 "Religious Tolerance - 17 Centuries of the Milan Edict"

H.E. Amb. Mirko Jelic

17.00 "Exploring the Judaeo-Christian Scriptures - for Age-old Templates for Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue"

Auxiliary Bishop Pablo Virgilio S. David

17.30 "Intellectual Culture and Peace-Building: Perspectives From the Sokoto Caliphate"

His Eminence Sultan Muhammad Saad Abubakar

18.00 "Interreligious Dialogue and Practical Social Action"

H.E. Amb. Lars-Hjalmar Wide

18.30 "European Culture in Globalized world"

MP Vášáryová Magdaléna

Conference Timetable

Wednesday, April 2nd, 2014

10:00 - 13:00 SIOI

14:00 - 18:00 St. Egidio Community

10:00 Lecture & Discussion

H. E. Amb. August Parengkuan

10.30 "The Role of Inter-faith Dialogue in Peace Building"

Mufti Akhmed Tamim

11.00 "The Promotion of World Peace through Christian/Muslim Dialogue in Jordan"

H.E Maroun Laham

11.30 Lecture & Discussion

Director Christos Koukliotis

12.00 "European Culture in Globalized world"

Rev. Olivier Reigen Wang Genh

12.30 "Interfaith Dialogue in the Mediterranean Basin"

His Eminence Metropolitan Stephanos of Tallinn

14.00 Welcome Address

President Marco Impagliazzo

14.30 "The Role of Inter-Faith Dialogue in Peace Building and Reconciliation"

President Angelo (Anglu) Farrugia

15.00 "The Future has the Flavor of the Past"

Senator Mihai Razvan Ungureanu

15.30 "The Role of Religious Communities in Peace Promotion -Bosnian Model"

His Eminence Husein ef. Kavazovic

16.30 "The Importance of Inter-Religious Ethics"

H.E Amb. Dr. Kenan Gürsoy

17.00 "Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace"

Archbishop Ignazio Sanna

17.30 "PAM approach to promote and facilitate interfaith dialogue and its applications in the Mediterranean"

Senator Francesco Maria Amoroso

18.00 "Respecting and Protecting Religious Heritage-An Important Contribution to Interfaith Dialogue"

Dr. Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis

Conference Timetable

Thursday, April 3rd, 2014

SIOI

10:00 "From Deconstruction to Reconstruction of Civil Society Through Inter-Religious Dialogue"

Secretary General Olivera Jovanovic

10.30 "Democracy & Faith"

MP Lia Quartapelle

11.00 "The Arab Spring Opportunities and Threats for ME Prace"

Wafik Moustafa

11.30 "The Role of Culture and Cultural Diplomacy in Peace"

H. E. Amb. Mai Alkaila

12.00 "Model of Arranging Relations Between the State and Religious Communities and Fostering Interfaith and intra-social Dialogue in Order to Promote Peace and Stability"

Mufti Dr. Aziz ef. Hasanović

12.30 "Creation Theology as the Essential Basis of Inter-Faith Dialogue and Mutual Respect"

The Very Revd Prof. James Atwell

14:00 'Why Unity?'

**Anna Prior,
Dr. Shamender Talwar**

14.30 "Restoring Faith: Reviving the Role of Religion in the Promotion of World Peace"

Sheikh Ramzy

15.00 "Recognition of the Proximity of Spiritual Values in international Law Explanation"

H.E. Amb. Théodore C. Loko

15.30 Lecture & Discussion

Lisa Palmieri-Billig

16.30 Participant Papers

"Citizen Diplomacy, Minefields & Miracles: Why God and Allah Need to Talk"

Ruth Brojde Sharone

17.00 Participant Papers

"The Role of Interfaith Dialogue in Peacebuilding, Transforming Tolerance into Empathy: Cultural Imperatives in the Interfaith Dialogue"

Amb.Prof. Akama Jared Onyari

"True peace on Earth: A Matter of Pure Intention"

Sathanama Sleur 17:30 Participant Papers

"The Church-State(s) Problem: The Holy See in the International Theoretical (or Theological) Marketplace"

James G. Cussen

"Critical Encounters Between Religion, Peace and Cultural Diplomacy"

Silvia Fagarasan

18.30 Conclusion of the Event and Farewell



Speaker List

Claudia Bandion

Secretary General, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue

The Honorable Franco Frattini

Former Foreign Minister of Italy

The Hon. Halldór Ásgrímsson

Vice President of the ICD; Former Prime Minister of Iceland

Dr. Paul Jacob Bhatti

Former Minister of National Harmony and Minority Affairs of Pakistan

President Stjepan Mesić

Former President of Croatia

The Bishop Fülöp Kocsis

Bishop of the Diocese of Hajdúdorog, Hungary

The Hon. Erhard Busek

Former Vice Chancellor of Austria

H.E. Amb. Lars-Hjalmar Wide

Ambassador of Sweden to the Holy See

Senator Linda Lanzillotta

Vice President of the Italian Senate

H.E. Amb. Mirko Jelenc

Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the Holy See

Auxiliary Bishop Pablo Virgilio S. David

Auxiliary Bishop of San Fernando, the Philippines

MP Reinhold Lopatka

Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of the Austrian People's Party in the National Council

The Hon. Sandro Gozi

Member of the Italian Parliament

Sen. Lucio Malan

Member of the Italian Senate

Sen. Ivana Simeoni

A lecture by Sen. Ivana Simeoni (Member of the Italian Senate)

H.E. Alhajimhammad Sa'Ad Abubakar

Sultan of Sokoto and President General, Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic affairs

MP Vášáryová Magdaléna

Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic

President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

Former President of Spain

H. E. Amb. August Parengkuan

Ambassador of Indonesia to Italy

Sheik Ahmed Tamim

Mufti of Ukraine

Alberto Quattrucci

Secretary General of Community of Sant' Egidio

President Angelo (Anġlu) Farrugia

Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta

H.E. The Archbishop Chrysostomos II

Office of the Holy Archbishopric of Cyprus, on behalf of Archbishop Chrysostomos II, the Archbishop of Cyprus.

Sen. Francesco Maria Amoroso

President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean



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Dr. Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis

Former Foreign Minister of Cyprus

His Eminence Husein ef. Kavazovic

Grand Mufti of Bosnia & Herzegovina

His Eminence Ignazio Sanna

Archbishop of Oristano, Italy

H.E. Amb. Dr. Kenan Gürsoy

Ambassador of Turkey to the Holy See

Rev. Olivier Reigen Wang Genh

Vice President, Buddhist Union of France

His Eminence Metropolitan Stephanos of Tallinn

Primate of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church

H.E Maroun Laham

Patriarchal Vicar for Jordan of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Senator Mihai Razvan Ungureanu

Member of Romanian Senate, Former Prime Minister of Romania

Anna Prior and Dr. Shamender Talwar

Founders of The Unity of Faiths Foundation

Mufti Dr. Aziz ef. Hasanović

President of Meshihat of Islamic Community in Croatia

MP Lia Quartapelle

Member of the Italian Parliament, Democratic Party

H. E. Amb. Mai Alkaila

Ambassador of Palestine to Italy

Olivera Jovanovic

Secretary General of Interreligious council in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Rev. Fr. Patrick H. Daly

General Secretary of Comece, the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community

His Excellency Théodore Comlanvi LOKO

Ambassador of Benin to the Holy See

Ruth Broyde Sharone

Filmmaker, Author & Journalist, Southern California Parliament of the World's Religions

Sheikh Ramzy

Imam, Director of Iqra Islamic institute

Prof. James Atwell

Head of Winchester Cathedral

The Hon. Wafik Moustafa

Primate of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church





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"Dialogue: An Essential Key to Cultural Diplomacy and Religion"

A Lecture by Claudia Bandion - Ortner (Secretary General, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue)

Rome; March 31st, 2014



Your Excellencies, respected Religious leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning. It's a pleasure and a privilege for me to be here with you today, in this distinguished gathering of policymakers, religious and spiritual leaders and diplomats, and to share with you some reflections on a topic that has such relevance and resonance for all of us today.

Two hundred years ago this year, a cornerstone was laid for international diplomacy and dialogue when the Congress of Vienna brought together ambassadors from around Europe to design peaceful coexistence for an entire continent. It was a historic first and a success story for dialogue. Just over a century ago, Austria became one of the first European countries to recognize Islam as a religion, and anchored its recognition in law. That law is also a milestone in interreligious and intercultural justice and dialogue. And just over 50 years ago, the international treaty that establishes the diplomatic relations between independent states was concluded in Vienna, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

As you know, I am the Deputy Secretary General of international organisation, the King Abdullah Bin

Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, or KAICIID, based in Vienna. Also, I am Austrian and a former Austrian Minister of Justice, thus I treasure these achievements: they demonstrate that Vienna is a city of dialogue and diplomacy. They also prove that dialogue can foster lasting, beneficial change in international relations. That is one of KAICIID's core missions – to utilize dialogue to build bridges that help people come together to overcome prejudice, to convert fear to understanding, to provide a path to peace. We also know in Vienna, in Europe, across the globe that when dialogue is not inclusive, or when it does not occur, disaster follows. 2014 marks a tragic centenary: the beginning of a World War that devastated lives and cultures across this continent. Worse yet, another more horrific Great War engulfed the world not a generation later. That was followed by the Cold War. Those 40 years of fear ended when dialogue finally laid that conflict to rest.

We meet here today at this forum because we have, as a world, learned from these disasters: we have learned that without dialogue, there can be no diplomacy. And without diplomacy, there cannot be lasting peace. We know that without dialogue there can also be no justice.

In 2003, France and Germany, adversaries in both World Wars, overcame that history and undertook a bi-national project that produced the first French-German history textbook used by public schools in both nations. They now share a story that explains the causes and effects of those conflicts.

How could former enemies learn to agree on a common narrative? Through dialogue.

This past month a journey ended here in Rome. It was a journey that exemplifies the role of dialogue in promoting peaceful coexistence and enhancing understanding.

An interfaith group in Argentina wished to promote that country's remarkable success in sustaining peaceful relations between Christian, Islamic and Jewish communities. To spread that message a delegation of 43 Argentinean Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders travelled to the Middle East and met heads of government. They were strangers at the beginning of their trip. By the time the trip ended, 10 days later in Rome with an audience with the Pope, the group's members had visited the holy sites of each other's faiths and had come to understand the sources of inspiration these religions provide to followers. They had become friends with a common vision. These stories teach us that dialogue works: to overcome differences between people, to build reconciliation and forgiveness, to promote respect and coexistence. And it has never been more necessary to remember and practice these lessons.

In this age of globalization, we are ever more interconnected. We are more aware of our religious and cultural diversity. Is that a cause for growing conflict around the world?

We meet at a time when global governance is severely tested, whether in the Middle East, Africa or Asia. More than ever, interreligious conflict is under the spotlight as a major source of world ills. Yet those ills are created when religion is abused to justify conflict and violence. The real cause of the conflict remains hidden and thus more difficult to resolve. Peace under those circumstances remains elusive. This is where dialogue comes in. But what can dialogue do for the religious disputes that afflict so many parts of the global landscape today? In practical terms, how can dialogue be used to reduce conflict in long-standing, complex situations? Can dialogue be used in new conflicts to reconcile groups so committed to their perceptions that they have forsaken decades of peace in favor of violent

dispute?

I, and many others, believe that it can.

And this is why I am proud to represent the first intergovernmental organization that seeks to place dialogue at the heart of the global agenda, the first truly global attempt to bridge the gaps between policy makers, religious leaders and institutions. This belief in interfaith dialogue, and its role in building peace and resolving conflict, in helping policymakers build a fairer, more inclusive world, is the reason why King Abdullah, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, called for dialogue in 2005 among followers of different religions and cultures. And, seven years later, after much dialogue between followers of different religions and members of different cultures, KAICIID was founded in 2012. KAICIID is dedicated to promoting dialogue for reconciliation and peace-building.

We at KAICIID believe that our organization, our work, and the culture of dialogue that we are building, is based on inclusiveness. Our multilevel, multilateral governance structure allows us to convene policymakers, religious leaders and experts. KAICIID is overseen by a multilateral, multilevel governance structure: The Centre's Founding States - the Republic of Austria, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom of Spain - constitute the "Council of Parties", responsible for overseeing its work. The Holy See is the Centre's Founding Observer; while the Board of Directors comprises high-level representatives of major world religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism) and many cultures.

The first step in dialogue is crucial...listening to all parties involved. When we are invited to apply the KAICIID method of intervention, we build dialogue inclusively. We focus on fostering the active participation of religious groups in this dialogue. This approach provides a safe space for dialogue without commitment to any particular solution. It invites participants to build relationships based on mutual respect and with serious consideration

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of their common values and recognition of their genuine differences.

When we build dialogue among Believers of the same and different faith, we come to recognize and respect our differences. We also discover what we both hold dear and which principles we share. That process of discovery helps us all to be more just in our respective perceptions of one another's religions. So what is the kind of dialogue I am describing? It is a bridge. From hostility to engagement. From mistrust to mutual understanding. From divergent parochial goals to a convergent mission to greater societal harmony. It means actively listening to each other's perspectives on often-difficult issues, so we can learn more about the 'Other's' perspectives on how to tackle the challenging issues humanity faces today.

What KAICIID proposes is relatively new, at least in the intergovernmental circles of the international community. We work to create more dialogue between politicians and religious leaders on any issue they find necessary. We want to prevent the manipulation of religious identity by narrow political agendas. Also we want to prevent religious agendas from manipulating the political process. We need openness and transparency in relations between religion and politics. We wish to help religious leaders achieve an opportunity to play a more constructive role in building their societies, too.

In 2013, we went out in search of answers to all of the questions I just raised. When we surveyed experts in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, we heard the same recommendation: connect the educational policy-makers and the religious leaders. Their networks are fragmented. They cannot share information nor engage in professional development in interreligious and intercultural education. So, we launched a policy network that is unique in interreligious education. The network informally connects experts and governmental focal points from Education, Religious Affairs and Integration ministries. This network brings together the widest

possible range of regions and stakeholders to share knowledge and best practices on interreligious and intercultural issues in formal education and lifelong learning while emphasizing potential solutions.

Religion and politics overlap in our interconnected world. We are aware that even our most professional dialogical methods, best practices and benevolent intent will not suffice if policy makers are not engaged. Dialogue cannot contribute towards peace, unless it becomes a priority anchored in government policy. Both religious leaders and policy makers then need to pursue, through dialogue and openness common actions that help communities turn away from hostility and transform mistrust into understanding.

KAICIID intends to establish a mechanism of follow up, which means that our interventions won't be isolated activities, but rather a continuous process that seeks true, sustainable reconciliation. KAICIID has the vision, capacity, and tools to promote dialogue regardless of the religious affiliations of the parties involved. Our commitment is to the process and not to any partisan ideology or agenda.

Already, this policy network has facilitated the creation of a multi-state curriculum development initiative.

KAICIID is also working with partners to build peace and social cohesion. To that end, we launched in 2013 a multi-year programme called "The Image of the Other". Through this programme of research, consultations, conferences and network building, KAICIID is investigate the depiction of people who are considered to be 'Others' because they follow different religious traditions or belong to different cultural backgrounds. Their depiction in education, media, the Internet and social media affects how they are understood and ultimately how well they are accepted and integrated.

Sadly, we have seen time and again how conflict can grow from the misrepresentation of the "Other". Dialogue can combat these prejudices and that is also one of the key objectives the Founding Member

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States agreed KAICIID would pursue.

Throughout 2014, KAICIID will continue its "Image of the Other" initiative in education, as well as looking at the "Image of the Other" in the media, social media and on the Internet. Those digital spaces are increasingly influential and are the natural gathering places for the young. Especially the young people born after 1995, after the introduction of the 'Web', the so-called 'digital natives', they are already voting! They will be entering their 20's in about a year! The world view of millions of young people is shaped by images delivered via tablets and smart phones. KAICIID wishes to understand and act in that arena.

Dialogue also means partnerships. KAICIID concluded cooperation agreements with leading actors in the field of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, including the African Union, ISESCO, the World Scouts Foundation, and the University of Montreal. In this month, UNESCO's Executive Board will be considering a cooperation agreement with KAICIID and already we work together on projects. We are also engaged in close partnerships with Religions for Peace, United Religions Initiative and other non-governmental bodies.

Finally, KAICIID is beginning to work with mediation experts in formulating an ongoing facility to establish peacebuilding dialogues that will bring together governmental, intergovernmental, civil society and religious leaders.

In sum, KAICIID works with many partners and in many regions for one purpose: to empower organizations already working on the promotion of dialogue around the world.

Empowerment comes from training and facilitated dialogical encounters. Dialogue training is about learning how listening to others is as important as sharing about yourself. It requires time and respectful engagement to be both true to yourself

and open and respectful of other people. To aim to learn together about each other. There is a mutuality in dialogue that makes it more than conversation. There is an element of mutual learning and potential transformation.

If you should not yet be convinced that interreligious and intercultural dialogue can contribute to greater peace, let me provide another argument. Every major religion is guided by a common impetus to bring about forgiveness between the unreconciled, to promote peace when faced with strife, to sow compassion in the midst of anger, and to achieve justice. These common desires and visions outweigh the differences that superficially separate traditions and cultures. Dialogue helps us to recognize that what we hold dear is treasured by many, many others. That realization can change our perspective and we can see kinship where we once saw 'Otherness'.

Allow me to leave you with one final story of success, of dialogue's improbable power to change lives: two Nigerian religious leaders, the Christian Pastor James Wuye and the Islamic Imam Mohammad Ashafa, once were at war. Then, they were combatants, not yet religious people. They led militias that fought each other in northern Nigeria. Through dialogue, they learned to lay down their weapons and to work together to bring peace to that region. These religious leaders embody a message of reconciliation in a setting where forgiveness seems to the outsider to be impossible. It is only impossible if no one tries to talk.

If there is one message for this forum that I would wish to deliver, it is this: dialogue makes all the difference between peace and conflict. That message was true a century ago in Sarajevo and it is true today in Bangui and Damascus.

We at KAICIID look forward to working with you to create dialogue and build peace around the world.

Thank you very much.

Biography

Claudia Bandion - Ortner

Secretary General, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue

Claudia Bandion-Ortner was born in Graz on the 30th of November, 1966. She graduated from Karl-Franzens University in Graz in 1989 with a Master's degree in Law.

Bandion-Ortner began her career as a judge at the regional court for criminal matters in Vienna. She subsequently became a chief judge. She was appointed Minister of Justice to the coalition cabinet led by Werner Faymann on the 15th of January, 2009. Although she was an independent figure, the People's Party (partner of the Social Democratic Party in the coalition) nominated her for the post. Her tenure lasted until the 20th of April, 2011.

After leaving office, Bandion-Ortner served as the senior advisor at the International Anticorruption Academy in Laxenburg, outside Vienna, from August 2011 to August 2012. In November 2012, Bandion-Ortner was appointed Deputy Secretary General of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) that is based in Vienna.

"The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"

A lecture by The Hon. Franco Frattini (Former Foreign Minister of Italy)

Rome; March 31st, 2014



Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to be speaking here today on a subject that is particularly close to my heart. A subject on which I believe it is worth opening a lively inter-cultural dialogue: the spiritual dimension in the era of globalisation.

I speak to you today in the same spirit that has always inspired Italian foreign policy on these questions: the awareness that it is only through open debate and the dissemination of different points of view that we will be able first, to understand each other. Second, to appreciate the progress promoted by so many governments in this respect. And third, to abandon certain all too deeply-rooted stereotypes. This is not a question of delivering lessons, but of discussing questions that, for all those who truly care about global progress and stability, are of central importance in today's world.

We are living through a period of history marked by deep change and growing uncertainties. The end of the cold war increased our perception of insecurity, added to the range of actors on the multilateral stage and redefined the hierarchy of international power.

A world as interconnected as ours is a world that calls upon each of us – states, citizens and organised groups in civil society – to become more engaged, to take on more responsibility to safeguard peace and harmonious co-existence. Each of us must necessarily have a direct interest in the well-being of the others, which in turn will have repercussions for the stability of each and every one of us. The contagion of crises now spreads very quickly, and these crises project their effects over a very broad range and with repercussions that can set off chain reactions.

The recent economic-financial crisis demonstrated this all too clearly.

But the destinies of our humanity are at stake, if we think of growing poverty and desperation, climate change and environment degradation, or conflict and post conflict situations, where too often the largest number of victims is represented by the poorer and the weaker, first of all women and children.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the international scenario I mentioned earlier, the peoples of the world are feeling a more intense need to reaffirm their cultural identities and to seek to become members of – and identify with – movements defined under rigid and exclusive criteria. The return, in many countries of the world, to traditional cultural customs, often in their most orthodox forms, seems to represent a shield against a modernisation that is wrongly perceived as being imposed by the West and stigmatised as being fraught with danger.

Against this background, we are witnessing a new "protagonism" of the spiritual component, which has carved out a growing space for itself in today's


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society but has in some cases taken on extremist forms.

In the collective imagination the perception now prevails that the religious factor inspires conflicts, fundamentalist movements and tensions in so many regions of the world. On all sides, and for too long, people have been fanning the flame of hateful theories concerning the clash of religions and civilisations and between the West and Islam. Such theories offend both the truth and our fundamental values.

How can it be possible that religious observance has grown to be the source of conflict par excellence? And what can we, together, do to once again build upon the enormous “positive” potential of the great religious traditions? These traditions are a key element in achieving a better knowledge and understanding of the world and its dynamics. They can and must once again play their part in the quest for peace. They can influence the way that leaders and peoples view these issues and encourage different forms of social organisation and cooperation.

We are living at a time when it is urgent to mend the global fracture between, on the one hand, an open and tolerant conception of human co-existence and, on the other, totalitarian pressures that are reluctant to accept the diversity that is inherent to our world. That is why recourse to the spiritual dimension offers us an unrivalled instrument for dialogue and mutual understanding. At the international level, naturally, but also at the national level.

All the Governments should battle on all fronts to defend freedom of religion, understood in its broadest sense as the right to profess a religion and manifest one’s faith in public. It is for us the heart of civil co-existence, the individual right par excellence. But it is also a guarantee of a society’s founding values since the religious dimension encompasses both the individual’s intimate relationship with God and the drive to create a community with others.

Religious freedom is a cardinal principle of our civilisation, one that is sanctioned by the Italian Constitution. It is one of the founding principles of

the European project and is reiterated by numerous international instruments that are the cornerstones of the international system for the protection of human rights. To mention just two: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 – which the Organisation of the Islamic Conference recently recognised as having the value of international customary law – and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966.

It worries us to witness, so regularly, violent situations where this right is attacked. Cruel attacks on religious minorities, coercive practices against those not belonging to the faith of the majority, or more sophisticated forms of discrimination and marginalisation, on the cultural level and in participation in public, civil and political life. The Italian initiatives for religious freedom arose from the persecution and blood-stained events that have followed on one from the other. These episodes should be addressed and opposed, not least to foster a better understanding of the Islamic world and its presence in Europe.

We are each of us called, therefore, to help prevent and avert all cases of intolerance through the only two tools that are truly effective: dialogue and multilateralism.

It is the world of politics that is called upon first and foremost to do so. At the national level, it is the leaders who must provide solutions to the problems of multi-ethnic co-existence without losing sight of the sensibilities at stake.

And at the international level, states have the task of working together with conviction in all those fora that have been created to foster dialogue, bring cultures closer together and ensure that the full weight of religion is brought to bear both in crisis prevention and in re-solving conflicts. Conflicts and crises that today more than ever require a multi-dimensional response.

But in the quest for a new social and inter-faith harmony we also place our trust in religious groups and leaders. Who more than they can lay the groundwork for a dialogue based on the deepest values of mankind and solidarity, values that are


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common to all religions? Who better than they can build on the potential of the spiritual dimension in the quest for international stability and sustainable development?

Finally, co-existence is also a challenge for civil society, for students, for associations, for all of that closely-woven fabric that makes up society and has the power to influence policy and make its voice heard with true courage.

I know I am speaking to men and women whose spiritual pathway is different from that of my own cultural tradition. But I do so in a spirit of great sincerity, in the hope that our views might coincide on certain fundamental principles. The first principle that I wish to underscore is that religion cannot be instrumentalised to justify violations or abuses of human rights, including the right of full religious freedom.

We should all loudly proclaim that whoever kills or injures a human being by naming God, commits the worst blasphemy!

Biography

President Franco Frattini

Former Foreign Minister of Italy

President Franco Frattini is a long-serving Italian politician who has had an illustrious career.

President Frattini attended the “Giulio Cesare” Classical High School in Rome and graduated in law in 1979. From 1984 he was State Attorney and magistrate of the Regional Administrative Court (TAR) in Piedmont. Then in 1986 he was named member of the Italian Council of State and legal adviser of the Treasury Ministry.

President Frattini served as a Junior Minister in the Berlusconi and Dini cabinets between 1994 and 1996, he was later elected to the northern constituency of Bolzano-Laives, a post he maintained until 2001. During this time he also served as a City Councilor in Rome and as Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for the Supervision of Intelligence, a position to which he was elected by a unanimous vote.

Under the second Berlusconi administration, President Frattini occupied the post of Foreign Minister for the duration of 2001 to 2004. Following this, President Frattini took up the position of European Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security. After the snap 2008 elections President Frattini returned to the post of Foreign Minister for the duration of Berlusconi’s fourth cabinet from 2008 and 2011.

Currently, President Frattini is the President of the ICD Organization for Youth Education & Development. He is also the President of the Italian Society for International Organization (SIOI), a non-profit organization of internationalist character, working under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. President Frattini is the first politician to fill a position previously reserved for diplomats and academics of the highest level.

"Welcome Address to the International Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy and Religion"

A lecture by the Hon. Halldór Ásgrímsson (Vice President of the ICD; Former Prime Minister of Iceland)

Rome; March 31st, 2014



Excellencies, ladies, gentlemen, dear friends. Thank you Mark for this introduction.

When we are talking about religion we tend to go back into the past and I think I will also do that here today, going a little bit back into the past. More than one thousand years ago Christianity was adopted in my country. How was that done? The Icelanders were heathens before. They came to the parliament and there were two groups: one heathen and one Christian. It looked like a great battle was breaking out with weapons. Then people decided to choose one man, which was the president of the parliament, to decide what to do. He was the leader of the heathens. He was thinking for one day and stood up and came with his verdict. He said: "we shall have one religion and one law, because if we break the law we break the peace". On that basis he decided that everybody was to be Christian. This was not very popular by everybody, but he also decided that they could keep their customs in secrecy. Maybe that this caused that these customs were forgotten some years later.

This is not possible today. We have to live under one law, but we have to live under the circumstances that we have many religions, different cultures and

different habits. We have to find a solution how to do this. We need to live in unity. In a way we all have the same wish. We have the wish to live in peace. We want respect, respect for human beings, respect for our societies, respect for our freedoms, respect for our different religions, and respect for justice.

The theme we going to discuss today is the promotion of world peace through interfaith dialogue. Of course this is possible. Why are we doing that now? I think we all see the desperate need. We see the situation in Syria, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Iran, in the Middle East, in Sudan and in other places in Africa. Now we see a situation in the hearth of Europe, in Ukraine. There is a desperate need for peace. If we are looking into the future we are seeing big challenges – especially with climate change. It will not be easy to meet the new conditions in the world. We need tolerance, understanding and dialogue between countries, between religions and so on.

We have decided to do this here in Rome. Why is Rome a good place? Rome has a very special place in our hearths and minds. Although we are not all Catholics, and I am not a Catholic either, we have great respect for Rome, the Vatican and the Pope. We have seen that they can help to find solutions and have been able to work for peace in the world. I think we all have trust in the Roman Catholic Church to lead discussions and dialogue between religions. Finally I would like to quote a man who was living in my country in the year 1200. Just before he died he said: "Heavens creator, hear the poets prayer. May your merciful grace grant me its embrace. Thus I wove thee who has created me. I am your slave, you are my lord".

I think we can all agree on this, we can all agree that we are the slaves of those who created us. We

have an obligation to work in this spirit, we have an obligation to work for peace, we have an obligation to work for cooperation between religions and societies in the world. We have to walk that road. I certainly hope that this conference will help us

in leading us into the future to find peace among nations; to help us to respect each other in every way and respect each other more than we have done in the past.

Biography

The Hon. Halldór Ásgrímsson
Vice President of the ICD; Former Prime Minister of Iceland

The Hon. Halldór Ásgrímsson is the Former Prime Minister of Iceland and Former Secretary General for the Nordic Council of Ministers, a position he has held since 2007. The Nordic Council of Ministers is an inter-governmental forum aimed at facilitating Nordic cooperation.

Mr. Ásgrímsson obtained his graduate degrees from the Bergen and Copenhagen Universities of Commerce. Mr. Ásgrímsson also held a position as a Lecturer at the University of Iceland in the Economics and Business Administration Faculty between 1973 and 1975.

During his career, Mr. Ásgrímsson has held many prominent ministerial positions nationally, as well as internationally. Mr. Ásgrímsson began his ministerial career in 1983 as the Minister for Fisheries, and then served as the Minister for Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs from 1988 to 1989. He was also the Minister for Nordic Cooperation between from 1985-1987 and 1995-1999, respectively. In 1995, Mr. Ásgrímsson became the Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade & Defense and Foreign Aid, a position he held until 2004.

Mr. Ásgrímsson has chaired and been a member of many distinguished institutions. In 1997, he became a member of the World Bank's Finance Committee, and then chaired the European Council's Ministerial Commission in 1998. In the years 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2006, he further chaired both the EEA Council and the EFTA Council. From 2002-2004 Mr. Ásgrímsson was also the Chairman of the Arctic Council.

Mr. Ásgrímsson has also had an active role in the Progressive Party in Iceland, becoming its Vice Chairman in 1980 and then later becoming its Chairman in 1994. Mr. Ásgrímsson was appointed Prime Minister of Iceland in 2004, a position he held until 2006.

"Living Together with Diversity is the Only Way Forward"

A lecture by Dr. Paul Jacob Bhatti (Former Minister of National Harmony and Minority Affairs of Pakistan)

Rome; March 31st, 2014



Good evening ladies and gentlemen. It is a matter of great privilege and great honor for me to be here with you and share my personal experience and views regarding the interfaith harmony, interreligious dialogue, and particularly the issue on which we are working. Working together with diversity is the only way forward. I would like to express my sincere thanks to president Franco Frattini, who I know for many years and who was the best friend of my late brother Shahbaz, and Mr. Mark Donfried for giving me this opportunity to talk on living together in diversity as the only way forward to bring peace in this world.

After the assassination of my brother Shahbaz in 2011 I was doing my practice in Treviso in one of the hospitals there. Where I was involved in my professional practice and I became used to live in Italy. Actually, here I was enjoying the professional relationship and society. I thought at that time: what are the problems of Pakistan? What do I do? Do I follow my brother? But I was no more in touch with him and I thought there is no possibility that this could change.

But after his assassination, when I went back to Pakistan, my idea was to bring all my family members of Pakistan and say goodbye to this

country where there is no hope of change, where there is no possibility to live together in diversity. But when I went there and I met several people of diverse faiths, especially Muslim friends who were sad and disappointed with this tragedy that had hit our family. At that time I was asked if I could continue his mission in Pakistan to promote interfaith dialogue and relationships. I was offered the Ministry of Minorities Affairs, which was the ministry of my late brother Shahbaz. I think that was the scene made by god and I accepted it. Though, in the beginning it was not my intention at all to follow the path of my brother.

Since then I am working in Pakistan. I was Minister for almost three years, and after the change of the government I am still in Pakistan. I am chairman of the All Pakistan Minorities Alliance, a movement founded by my late brother Shahbaz, which is committed to promote interreligious dialogue and relationships. Not only dialogue and relationships in the sense of talking of the common values, but finding those reasons and causes of the problems that are killing so many persons. So I will share some of my experience with you today.

As everybody knows, today different societies in the world are faced with millions of challenges—especially in my beloved country Pakistan. Where sectarian violence, religious intolerance, discrimination and terrorism has hit the maximum peaks of its history. Which was lead through political instability and an economic crisis. This has created a vicious circle, trapping the whole society of Pakistan. Every day we face the cruel and hard realities of loosing precious live, innocent victims, including our children and women. People from all sectors of society are affected and impacted in a deep way. Sadly the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity are considered a threat to each other, where it should be an enrichment and potential for growth. Despite

the strategic location the growing young population has the potential for civil democracy. Having a giant relative prosperity, Pakistan continues to confront terrorism, religious extremism, underdevelopment and political instability.

The persistent high levels of poverty and illiteracy are the root cause of these problems. As I was listening to other speakers who were trying to identify the root cause of their problems: why this extremism, why this intolerance, why this kind of discrimination between different people? I think one the causes in out country is poverty and illiteracy.

Poverty is particularly extreme among minorities. Intense poverty in our country leads to suffering, loss of hope, lost opportunity and creates a sense of grievance. All of which contribute to undermine Pakistan's long-term stability, prosperity, national harmony and peace.

Pakistan's illiteracy rate is 55%. Half of all adults, including two out of three women, are illiterate. The eighteenth amendment of the constitution of our country requires the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the age of five and sixteen. In a survey of 2012 an estimated 20 million children of all school ages, including 7,3 million primary school aged children, did not attend school. This deprived them of the right of education and prevented them from reaching their full potential. Investing in children and their education is right in principle and must be seen in practice, due to the positive impact it has on so many social-economic and religious dimensions.

Above all, this provides an environment for those groups who within certain extremist ideologies actively brainwashed children during schooling. They are brought up with the conviction to live, kill and die in the name of religion. They do not have another objective in life than to defend and live for this specific ideology, which is anti-human, anti-Islamic and against the teaching of any religion. Furthermore, it is against the basic human rights of children.

Religious minorities make up almost 5% of the total population. It is often said that minority groups are growing in numbers. This fear potentially triggers

aggressive reactions from those who view them as a threat. So discrimination with the act of violence can be seen in several sectors of life. It certainly affects the marginalized, oppressed and the fragile, who cannot retaliate.

The act of violence and discrimination are inspired by extremist ideology. Particularly concerning such discrimination against the oppressed and marginalized. This is beyond the fault of the system. In some cases false accusations are used to settle personal scores or to target religious minorities and further extremist agendas.

It has frightened the whole community of Pakistan. Every single person is affected in its way of life, leaving us powerless on several occasions. Behind such cruel reality there are complex phenomena, which clearly need to be identified and addressed.

This is part of the work we are determent to carry on. It is the legacy that passed on from my younger brother Shahbaz. I am convinced that the only way to bring peace in this world is by living together in diversity. Diversity should be considered a gift and an opportunity for society, not as a threat as it is now perceived in many societies. It is very clear to all of us that no religion actually advocates hatred, violence and discrimination. All strongly condemn killing in the name of religion. Yet most of the time religion is hijacked, misused to attack, divide, and create hatred and fear among people of diverse faiths.

We believe that the power of dialogue and relationships can bring revolutionary changes. We believe that education is the key, with the potential to transform the long-term future of people. It empowers people to lift themselves out of poverty. Children who are able to enjoy the benefit of quality education also have every opportunity to engage in meaningful employment, which in turn impacts the growth of the society. We want to improve access to and quality of schooling, wherever and however possible. The alternative is disparity in education influenced by multiple factors, such as: wealth, gender, ethnicity and geographic location.

We are convinced that the role played by the educator is vital in the success of any educational program;

bringing effective changes for the future. How and what is taught, including the hidden curriculum, of what is modeled through non-deliberately taughts deeply influence whether children appreciate and respect ethnic and religious diversity.

We know that if instilled early in life these negative attitudes resist change and contribute to the disintegration of the social fabric of communities, to discrimination and finally to sectarian violence.

Tackling poverty and building a stable prosperous and democratic society will not only help millions of affected people in our country, but also improve stability and peace in the world. It is imperative that we promote freedom of religion and values beyond childhood. We know that societies are more likely to flourish when the citizens have the freedom to wish their deepest believe and highest ideal.

At least more than 90% of the world population is religious believers. Therefore, more then ever there is a growing need for dialogue and relationships between religious communities. The role of religion and conflict present urgent challenges that require greater understanding and cooperation between people of diverse faiths. I would like to propose a religious and cultural dialogue center in Europe, for which I was talking with my friend Frattini and several others. Its objective is to create a platform where all the problems of religious diversity, intolerance and discrimination can be discussed. Not only involving the people from Europe, but involving people from all over the world, especially from those areas which are affected like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and other countries.

Here I would like to share one experience where religious dialogue and relationships have created dramatic chance in the society. In Pakistan there are extremist ideologies and millions of children are brainwashed to follow this extreme ideology. Many times when there are false or real accusations, especially of blasphemy, these are received as a thread to the religion. Without thinking and even considering any other positive aspect of that fact, a lot of people gather and attack the minorities.

In the past there have been cases where minority members have been killed, judges are killed, liars are killed and even my late brother Shahbaz was victim of such ideology.

One year ago, for the same objective, with the militias' attention against the minority community one twelve-year-old girl was accused of blasphemy. It was a false accusation. It was after midnight when the community informed me that this huge crowd came together that was going to kill the minority group. I talked with the Interior Minister, I talked with Alliance Forces people and they showed willingness to assist, but at the same time they said that if the gathering is too big then sometimes it would be difficult to control. Militias' made their agenda and next Friday morning was they were trying to announce in all the mosques that this girl committed blasphemy and we have to take this community. People were ready and even the governmental forces were afraid of that, because there are hundreds of mosques where this announcement was made and their followers could come and take the community.

At that time I had the idea to target all these religious leaders. I went to the prominent mosques and talked with these imams. We talked about the teaching of the Islam and they did not know anything of what was happening. They were just communicating this message that this one girl had committed blasphemy and should be punished. Surprisingly, these imams stood with me and saved this girl. They realized that this was the teaching of Islam. This was the first time in history that the Muslim community discovered this and freed the girl from this prison. The person who falsely accused her was put in prison.

This was my experience and hope. I think there is great space for communication, sometimes this dialogue which is very difficult in these countries cannot be installed in these communities. If we all together promote interreligious dialogue and relationships and work on one agenda, I think we can one day be able to bring peace and tolerance in this society and put an end to violence.

Biography

Dr. Paul Jacob Bhatti

Former Minister of National Harmony and Minority Affairs of Pakistan

Minister Bhatti worked as a medical doctor in several hospitals in Italy and Pakistan. He has served as a member of the Medical Council of Doctors, Surgeons and Dentists of Islamabad, Pakistan since 1992 and of the Medical Council of Doctors and Surgeons in Treviso, Italy since 2003.

In 2011, he was appointed Chairman of the All Pakistan Minorities Alliance. He serves as the Chairperson of the Shahbaz Bhatti Memorial Trust, named for his late brother who served as Minister of National Harmony until he was assassinated in 2011. In April 2011, after appealing to the Pope, he said he forgave those who killed his brother.

He has served as Minister of National Harmony and Minority Affairs since then.

"Religious Communities, Dialogue and Conflict Resolution"

A lecture by President Stjepan Mesić (Former President of Croatia)

Rome; March 31st, 2014



It is an honor and pleasure to be here at such a prominent event and deliver a speech on such an important and current issue. Particularly today, when the world is once again on the verge of conflict, and I dare say direct confrontation. Until recently we believed that the days of division and block conflict were over. With the fall of the Berlin wall came the assurance that democracy, partnership, equality and friendly international cooperation finally replaced the old balance of fear.

However, the new political context had to lead to a better economic situation. Particularly in less developed parts of the globe. Even though it is widely known, I will still remind everybody that some years ago the UN and some other international organizations expressed their concern about the gap in developed and undeveloped countries. So developmental goals were set to tackle the gap and speed up economic growth of the undeveloped world.

Unfortunately, today we can only acknowledge that the tasks that were set before us have seen no solution, while the gap only widened. The current situation is indeed grave.

Let me give you some examples of this. Only one

percent of the world population holds half of the gross world product, while the remaining 99 percent hold the other half. What could be more dangerous for the world balance? Is this not a social bomb, that could, should it explode, change the world as we know it.

In addition, it is hard to believe that gross world product is estimated to be around 70 trillion dollars, while at the same time world financial market turnovers amounts to approximately 400 trillion dollars. It is evident that this is a financial bubble. Mostly regulated by market speculations and speculative capital and paper without real cover.

Private greed of a small group of people threatens to destroy real economic processes and growth. Should this issue be left unattended it could turn into a direct threat that would lead to a more severe recession and economic collapse on a global scale.

This of course is no accident or result of the world economy cycle. The current situation is a consequence of the economic concept that was used to drive economic processes for the last 30 years.

The concept of economic growth and consequent development was approved only by a small group of wealthy people, far away from the eyes of the public. They did not seek any democratic approval of their plans, nor did they seek democratic approval by institutions that were meant to put these plans into action.

Thus we have seen unparalleled strive towards developing democracy and democratic institutions on one the hand and essential decisions being made without democratic procedures and practice on the other hand.

Lately we have seen the practice of the so-called democracy export. By using military interventions,

particular regimes in certain countries are being destroyed without any agreement with the relevant international institutions and without any international formal procedures needed for such actions. I want to be clear. Both UN and the relevant institutional international body and Security Council, as the part of this body, are being virtually dismissed. Most important decisions are made unilaterally.

As most important decisions are being made unilaterally, it can be said that multilateralism as a fundamental global decision making practice has been cast away. The question is how to solve this issue. The simplest and the only answer is the following: by reaffirming the significance of the UN and its bodies. It means going back to multilateralism as the only democratic mode of deciding. No previous unilateral actions, regardless of the place, resulted in the strengthening of democracy. On the contrary, they lead, and are still doing so today, to bloodshed and constant confrontation and schisms.

Almost every democracy export ended with chaos and fragmentation on the territory it was conducted on. So it is necessary for the world to repower the dialogue as the only tool for conflict and issue solving accompanied by the involvement of all international actors. The role of international religious organizations and religious leaders in this process is inevitable.

I come from the part of an area that 20 years ago was involved in the worst military conflict in the post World War II Europe. Lack of motivation for the dialogue contributed to the bloodshed and destruction. Unfortunately, religious communities in former Yugoslavia did not play the part that would be in accordance with their mission.

Instead of trying to calm down the sides, most of them decided to move closer to their national communities. This means that they have sided with nationalistic concepts and supported the practices of national leaders instead of preaching and teaching humanism and peace between people and nations, as declared by their religious teachings.

Even today I must say we hear the echo's of these actions. It should be noted however, that there were examples of active promotion of dialogue and peace by a part of the religious leaders of all churches of our region.

Our most important mission, as I have stressed earlier, is to reaffirm the dialogue as the fundamental tool for conflict resolution. Religious communities and their leaders should play a major part in this, because it forms the basis of their doctrines and teachings with the message of loving ones neighbor and unity between people and nations. These messages can stimulate not only believers, but also whole communities to strive towards closeness to people and nations. They can also encourage everyone to solve issues according to the principle of mutual respect and readiness for compromise.

This is the only possible way for finding a solution for current issues. In addition I have to point out one other thing. Nobody has the right to bring the world on the edge of overwhelming conflict because of his or her particular interests. No problem is unsolvable, provided that there is a will to negotiate and reach a compromise that is acceptable for all parties.

Any other approach would bring us back to the cold war. We have to hope and believe that our steps towards democracy were not made just to bring us back into the times that we aimed at each other. We have to return to the route of strengthening peace and international cooperation with joined forces of all international actors and churches as major participants in this process.

Actions of pope Francis provide a basis for such optimistic thoughts. It is necessary to listen and be willing to rise above ones narrow interests. Peace and wellbeing should be available to everyone and that is the universal message of all religions. Therefore, this should be a message of all the churches and all religious communities.

I thank you for your time and patience.

Biography

President Stjepan Mesić
Former President of Croatia

Stjepan Mesić (born 24 December 1934) is a Croatian politician who served as the second President of Croatia from 2000 to 2010. Before his ten-year presidential term, he held the posts of Speaker of the Croatian Parliament (1992–1994), Prime Minister of Croatia (1990), the last President of the Presidency of Yugoslavia (1991), Secretary General of the Non-Aligned Movement (1991), a judge in Našice, and mayor of his home town of Orahovica.

Mr. Mesić was a deputy in the Croatian Parliament in the 1960s, and was absent from politics until 1990 when he joined the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), and was named Prime Minister after HDZ won the elections. He was appointed to serve as SR Croatia's member of the Yugoslav Federal Presidency where he served first as Vice President. In 1991 he served as the last President of Yugoslavia before Yugoslavia dissolved.

Following the breakup of Yugoslavia, Mesić served as Speaker of the Croatian Parliament from 1992 to 1994, when he left HDZ. With several other members of parliament, he formed a new party called Croatian Independent Democrats (HND). In 1997 the majority of HND members, including Mesić, merged into the Croatian People's Party (HNS).

After Franjo Tuđman had died in December 1999, Mesić won the elections to become the next President of Croatia in February 2000. He was re-elected in January 2005 for a second five-year term. Mesić topped the polls as the most popular politician in Croatia during his two terms.

"Perspectives on Cultural Diplomacy"

A Lecture by the Bishop Fülöp Kocsis (Bishop of the Diocese Hajdudorog, Hungary)

Rome; March 31st, 2014



Thank you very much for your invitation. I am pleased to be here with you today. First of all, you will have to excuse me because I can't speak English very well, and I'll try to give my conference in English, but I would like to ask my friend to help me.

The second thing is that I'm a simple monk, a spiritual man, and I can't speak about the situation of Hungary, but I would like to add a spiritual thought to this discussion, I hope it can be useful for us too.

I would like to speak about leadership and conscience. The title isn't written here, as it is a phrase of Hungarian writer: if he who stands on the summit is not sent, who else can attract our souls to look upwards?

If you are though in a position of authority it is not enough to be a leader, you must also be a compass who points in the right direction as soon as others see him. He doesn't want us to go astray not only by his raised voice but also by his very existence. It is a leader's duty to serve as an example to others: in other words to become the living conscience of his people. This applies even more strongly to political leaders as they are entrusted with the government of an entire country, not just a group, or a company.

Can a country or a nation have a conscience, can

the soul of many different people be treated as one, and can the words of assured conscience be captured. Each one of us thinks in different ways and follows different ideas. A group, a company or a church community is motivated by the same goal. So, a coercive spirit can be defined more clearly. The coercive force of a nation appears in quite a different manner. There are shared motives, even a shared goal can be set, but a shared spiritual way of thinking which could form the basis of shared conscience cannot be formed.

Another reason a nation is incapable of having conscience is it's his lack of a soul. Only individuals have souls and are capable of salvation. What I wish to point out here is implied that a nation needs individuals who by their very existence keep the conscience of each and one of us alive. Obviously it is inevitable to have the requisite that these individuals in charge have a clear conscience, transparent to all.

Nevertheless, I must give an account of an instance when I was struck with the realization that a community conscience does exist after all. It was a remarkable experience of mine from my early years as a priest. I was once shut up by a group of youths from the local housing estates. They said the following: „Father, tell us something, for we are feeling guilty“. Then we sat down together and I had a lengthy discussion with them. Only the Lord knows what my words back evoke in them. This is what a lot of ministers from whom we gave the seats but we can never know where and when they fall on a good soul and when they stay barren on the weedy ground.

Here at this conference I speak in the hope and believe that what I have to say will touch those who are entrusted with the responsibility of leadership and those who possess a sensitive and living conscience.


 International Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy & Religion - Rome, Italy; March 31st - April 3rd, 2014

The first: what is called the word of conscience by the spirituality of the West? The eastern spirituality causes light. I would like to say I'm not orthodox, but I'm byzantine right, and a catholic bishop. In the West our spirit speaks in the East it sees. It is no accident that in the non-Christian spirituality of the East the image of light and the notion of seeing play a more important and powerful role. But being a catholic bishop let me remain in the Christian World view. While searching for roots we soon realize that both images derive from the same source. It is not just a way of thinking; we were socialized and automatically adjusted later. If it were, it could be shaped, modified and influenced by public thinking, culture and civilization. The great influence of this on our behaviour is undeniable, but no sooner that our conscience, long buried, begins to speak again then the bigness and helplessness of this formerly soul dominant perspective is revealed.

An example: I have had too often the opportunity to sit at the deathbed of communist youth activists and party leaders and became convinced that if not before, in the moment of death our conscience can prevail and make us reconsider the guiding principles previously governing our entire life and all of our actions. To witness a person reconcile with God, at the very end of his life and no matter how he lived, seeing his soul make peace with his creator is one of the most precious experiences of a priest. But we shouldn't speak of hope as arising only in the shadow of death. It is only worth talking about the conscience of leaders. If he believes, it can influence the present and shape the future.

The roots of conscience lay deeper in the heart of our human existence. We see here the essence of our humanity, since nothing as in creation has a conscience or a soul. The world of our conscience reveals our common creation, our common root, from the Bushmen in Africa to Americans in the North and South, to us in good old Europe. It is the Christ's who know that and its manifestations are strongly influenced by the environment. Yet, even cannibals know that you should not kill members of your own tribes and family just out of hunger. The environment is indeed capable of influencing the

world of our conscience. At least we can hear from it. Sometimes it is very quiet or dies completely, gets disturbed and we begin hearing some other voice. It comes up especially in situation when hearing what our clear conscience has to say would be too embarrassing, too hard. By transforming it, we hear what we would like to hear. It is perhaps comforting that this is a long process and neither our soul nor our conscience gets disturbed straight away. Many, many acts are committed before the world of our conscience loses its beauty and clarity. The length of this process may also obscure and infect the conscience that lost its way on wrong path much earlier. Our conscience then sees it sending signs and an approaching internal node of approval appears instead - slight at first but with time it becomes stronger, stronger and louder than the noise of the street. I am afraid this may only be silenced at the edge of ... god forbid that, not even that.

Second, I have again arrived at the nightmarish imaginative doom, excused. Let us later return to the beginnings when everything is innocent and pure. It is for each to decide when this was. What is certain must all return to it. It need not mean a temporary term, in fact a mature or still growing personality moves forward precisely by making such returning and organic part of his life. If he listens to the voice of his conscience again and again, in short if he examines his conscience. Since our acts have an impact on others, the greater are our responsibilities, the more important are such spiritual examinations. In that we are not too poisoned but provide uplift, our souls must be regularly maintained. This applies to politicians as much as too any man of position of leadership. To act merely acceptably, avoiding scandals and bigger failures is not enough to build a country. A leader must be aware that he guides not with actions, even less with his words but primarily with his personality. Strange as it may sound, but it is our thoughts that affect our others most. Concealed as we assume them to be, yet they can easily be seen in our face, in our eyes, movements and gestures. Thus we must watch our thoughts the most. People care not about our words, nor our actions, but our thoughts. That is why we must stay pure to our very marrow or I should say the very


 "The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"

bottom of our hearts, or find a way back to it. For if someone new cries out, thank God I have got my purity, I have never diverted from the path of my conscience; I have never committed an error or a sin. He either doesn't understand what I mean or his flow to self-knowledge leaves him little chance to return to his early conscience yet.

I must speak about this because of the process, perhaps not sufficiently resisted by which people cannot disable being corrupted by power.

I first realised that while as a student I was walking in a park, near Rome established by Emperor Tiberius. I saw a bust of Caligula, though only her head. This was exactly what was terrifyingly revealing. The ruler not talented even in his youth was completely corrupted by power. The expression on his face terrifyingly demonstrated what once can turn into if lack of control makes him mad of power. It was all the more striking to me because during my student years in Rome here, I had the opportunity to meet Jean Paul II several times. And I was always moved at his remaining a simple man behaving natural even in the midst of the celebration of tens of thousands.

Third I know it isn't easy, since I became a leader myself, I have been experiencing in my own skin the numerous hidden traps on this path, and how alert I must be in order not to be biased by power. Leaders also know this temptation, at least those who can also look into their own souls. I talk about conscience in reference to this shared experience. Do what that and how far they need to look back, I couldn't possibly know. Or should be a constant and fundamental principle what Jesus said to those and those with authority. The greatest among you must behave as if you were the lowest. The leader is if he were the one who serves. It would be quite a liberating feeling for a nation if its leaders followed this sample, but it is difficult to implement precept. It is a truth from the gospel that it is worth returning to time after time and measuring out actions against. Modesty is not some kind of recklessness that humbles around aimlessly when deeds are called for. Real modesty tames ambition into effective steadfastness, turns eagerness to act in cooperation. It makes you not to brag but points out the merits of

others. Humility isn't severity but wisdom to avoid the hurdles of mistaken omniscience. Politicians must look into themselves with the Christ-like purity and ask themselves about the direction of god's realm, transpire under their leadership. Were there courageous political leaders that are able to adapt the power of this eternal realm that points to the attainment in their transient land it could have a prophetic power. And yet not country can be governed another way.

I'm discussing this because I am absolutely convinced that this is what most countries lack and Europe suffers from. Election campaigns disclosed absurdity of today's democracy. Enormous amounts of money and energy and especially human motions are wasted on this reckless competition. I was horrified to learn that a so called aid campaign was also part of the election campaign. Those parties don't just talk of their own merits thousands of ways but spend endless attention and money to sling mud at their opponents as well. Hatred can however never bring about right results. When Pope Francis called for prayer and fasting to stop the war in Syria, he issued a warning that we all know but fail to hear. War bigots war, violence bigots violence. Peace alone bigots peace. To bring this about we first need to make peace in our own souls. Regular examination of our conscience is therefore a must. If there is no peace in our souls it will show not only in our face but in our phrase too. It will leave its mark in the thinking of common work, on the development of youth and on the fabric of the homeland in the future. As a leader thinks today, so will the country think in a few years – a frightening responsibility indeed that must sink in. Ordinary people like looking up to someone. It is our ancient desire to aspire upwards. But who should take a look up too. Only credible, authentic and trustworthy people can be followed. Their greatness lies in their very modesty and humility. People in charge must grow great in their spirit and soul. It should be a principle of conduct, that if they make a mistake they must have the courage to examine their conscience. They ought I say to make self-reflection a part of their lives. People of action, the creators of great things need to pause and look into

themselves regularly and reflect over their actions. It is not merrily a psychological exercise. Listening to our inner voice, is listening to god's voice. This ability enables us to see, see with gods eyes. This is what makes us human. However follows only his reason will, will be sooner or later disappointed in himself. To cover it up with cheerful willingness and self-assured praised words only for a short time – that's just the surface. Inevitably disappointment in such leaders followed, which may even bring on the tragedy of an entire country.

You surely know the English saying 'For want of a nail, the shoe was lost. For want of a shoe, the horse was lost. For want of a horse, the rider was lost. For want of a rider, the message was lost. For want of a message, the battle was lost. For want of a battle, the kingdom was lost – and all for the want of a horse shoe nail'. This horse shoe nail is the conscience of a responsible leader, which must be examined every day. If it stands firm and straight, if it needs adjustment, the slight displacement, the least visible internal split can be fatal.

People on the guidance, tread and act with conscience if their leader walks not just before them but stands above them. Beneath people we can look up, since to only look upwards, knows no bounds. A soul need for eternal life, longs for this the most. And that's why he is not content to be the instruction, nor even the explanations, only when he looks upwards, does he know he is on the right path. Today's form of democracy has taken this away from the people. The only true glance, explanation at each other, we want to convince each other, but none of these gives us guidance. But who should

these people look up to? Respect clearly cannot be forced or commanded. Many have tried but such dictatorships we have grown tired of. At least I hope that we have become disillusioned for good with the manic worship of a sad, self-acquainted leader, placed above the people, yearning to look upwards. A tyrant always strikes a pathetic figure. A celebrity too – if I may add, who are not even extraordinary individuals most of the time, evokes the same path image. They are nothing to look up to, and yet thanks to crafty tricks, the attention of the multitude is lead to them. But sooner or later, this too ends in disinterment. Respect cannot be imposed, it can only be earned. How? - Definitely not by empty phrases. We have had plenty of experience with those, not even by actions as they can also be spectacular and yet backwards and worthless. Our inner worth cannot lie. Only those whose inner worth is noble can really attract others. Our time needs such leaders too. A pure spirit makes a person transparent and through him god's deeds are made visible and sensible. Astonishing as it may sound, but we must spell it out. Our souls aspiring upwards do need sense. National leaders ought not to settle for this, they must themselves strive to follow the lord, so that they would truly move people instead of just manipulating them with crafty tricks. To achieve this we need only to keep our souls clean. We need leaders of pure heart and faith, modest in their work and show humanity to their fellow men. How can people otherwise look up to?

Thank you for your attention •

Biography

The Bishop Fülöp Kocsis

Bishop of the Diocese Hajdudorog, Hungary

Péter Fülöp Kocsis (born on January 13, 1963 in Szeged, Hungary) is the current diocesan bishop of the Diocese of Hajdúdorog and from 2008 to 2011 apostolic governor of Apostolic Exarchate of Miskolc.

He studied at the Greek Catholic Theological Academy of Saint Atanáz and completed his education at Pontifical Salesian University in Rome. Kocsis was ordained priest in 1989. He taught on Greek Catholic Primary School in Hajdudorog and High School in 1990 and 1992. From 1992 to 1995 was priest in Tornabarakony. From 1995 Kocsis was to the Benedictine monastery of Chevetogne in Belgium to make monastic life. On November 6, 1998 he passed monastic vows before the bishop Solid Cross, taking the Monastic name Philip. Kocsis spent the Christmas of 1999 in Belgium taking monastic probation (novitiate). On June 30, 2008 he was consecrated bishop of Hajdúdorog Solid Cross, being co-consecrator the Greek Catholic Archbishop of Presov, Ján Babjak and Greek Catholic bishop Milan Šašik of Mukachevo.

"Cultural Diplomacy and Religions Today in Europe"

A Lecture by The Hon. Erhard Busek (Former Vice Chancellor of Austria)

Rome; April 1st 2014



was different. A lot of those, living in this country, have been non believers. It was very strong in the international press, because with this simplification it was possible to explain the conflict better. In reality it was a power play, which for sure was used by some religious leaders to get more influence in politics and to dominate the population. Also we have some developments in different countries, that religion is playing an important role. The patriarch of Belgrade was commenting the Kosovo issue, also in the conflict Ukraine-Russia the patriarch of Moscow did some very nationalistic statements.

What can be the positive side?

In the approach towards religions in our society is very often a difference: on the one side we have the feeling, that there is a real contribution of churches, religions and so on, being something like a light in our society. On the other side religion is very often used by politicians for even gaining more power and importance and as tool of confrontation between different groups, societies and nations. In general since the 60s we have a good development in the western part of Europe as longer the iron curtain was existing. In the eastern part religion was either dominated by the communist regimes, sending KGB agents in the hierarchy or it was a confrontation like in Poland, where the catholic church was the real opposition in the country, looking back with some success trough the trade unions movement Solidarność.

Now it is different: we have still a difference between east and west, but out of other reasons. Secularisation was more successful in the west, so that the old saying "Ex oriente lux - ex occidente luxus" is quite right. In the east, by the development of a new map, we are getting more confrontations. The most horrible time was in Bosnia-Herzegovina as in this war between 1991 and 1995 it was said: "Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats, Islamic Bosnians". The reality

Politic is asked to create framework conditions for religions. First at all the religious freedom and the guarantee by law, for their existence. For example that there is guaranteed a kind of dignity, in some cases even the inner rules and the financing of the churches. It might be sometimes in connection with the education system, were the influence of religions is different in countries. It is necessary, that we are pressing the politics to keep out of the internal affairs of the religions. It should be even criticised, if somebody religion is using as an argument for more political power. I remember a saying of the former Serbian Former Foreign Minister Vuk Drašković, who said in several speeches: "Kosovo is the Jerusalem of Serbia." I asked him: "Is it the Jerusalem of the Jews, the Christians or the Moslems?" A certain aggressiveness is created on this way, which for sure is not helpful.

On the other side the religion has an obligation to create values and an ethic behaviour. That is for sure quite necessary, because here by the religion there might it be possible to create a common basis by all the acceptances of the differences between the religions. We are approaching the global village! So far we are old neighbours and are living more

and more under the same conditions. So far it is necessary to develop common rules, values and an ethical approach concerning our obligation to keep the humanities alive and invest quality.

Concerning the activity of ICD I am quite happy that we are looking to cultural diplomacy also on the field of religions. It is a difficult job, because also within the different religions some leaders are living out of a certain aggressiveness following their principles and judging the others. So far we have to fight for a basic behaviour. Following the theologian Johann Baptist Metz I may name it "Empathy and

Compassion". Empathy means to get the feeling for the other, to know him, to be close to him and to be able to understand his position. Compassion is necessary to deal with the difficulties and the problems, that we are able to keep humanitarian standards in our world. What the religions and churches and other institutions are expressing, the "conditio humana", the circumstances under which the human beings are living together. Without "conditio humana" there is no peace possible and no preservation of our common world, which is given as a gift to us by god.

Biography

The Hon. Erhard Busek
Former Vice Chancellor of Austria

Dr. Erhard Busek was born in Vienna, Austria, on the 25th of March, 1941. He received his law degree from the University of Vienna in 1963. During his studies, he also served as Chairman of the Austrian Youth Council.

He began his professional career in 1964 as legal adviser to the association of the parliamentarians of the Austrian People's Party. He then served as Secretary General of the Austrian Federation for Trade and Commerce (1968–1975). In 1975 he was appointed Secretary General of the Austrian People's Party and was elected Member of Parliament later that year. Erhard Busek gained additional experience in administration between 1968-1976 while with a publishing firm in the economic field. In 1976 Busek entered municipal politics. He was City Councilor and was elected Deputy-Mayor of Vienna in 1978, a position he held until 1987. He was appointed Minister for Science and Research in April 1989. From 1994 until May 1995 Busek was Minister for Education. He was elected Chairman of the Austrian People's Party in 1991 and served as Vice-Chancellor of Austria from 1991 to 1995. In early 2000 Busek was appointed Special Representative of the Austrian Government on EU-Enlargement. He served in that position until December 2001.

Busek has delivered many lectures on domestic and foreign affairs and has participated in many conferences in Austria and abroad. He is Dr. hc. of the Universities of Kraków, of Bratislava, of Brasov and Czernowitz, of Liberec and of Webster-St. Louis University, Vienna. He is Rector of the University of Applied Sciences Salzburg, Visiting Professor at Duke University, NC, USA, and at the University of Agriculture in Vienna. He is also teaching at the University Innsbruck and the University of Vienna. In addition, his lectures are planned to be involved in the teaching program of the Vienna University of Technology (Technische Universität Wien) and at the University of Belgrade, Serbia.

From January 2002 until June 2008 Busek served as Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Furthermore he is the Coordinator of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI); Chairman of the "Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe" and President of the European Forum Alpbach.

He also has received awards and decorations from Poland, Hungary, Italy, Bulgaria, Liechtenstein, Romania, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. He is an Honored Senator of the Medical University of Innsbruck and is a laureate of the Corvinus-Price of the "Europa Institut Budapest".

Since 2008, Busek has agreed to advise the Economic Initiative for Kosovo in promoting foreign direct investments in Kosovo.

"Interreligious Dialogue and Practical Social Action"

A Lecture by H.E. Amb. Lars-Hjalmar Wide, Ambassador of Sweden to the Holy See

Rome; April 1st 2014



Distinguished Participants and Dear Friends,

I would like to thank the organizer, the ICD, for convening this important conference in this beautiful city of Rome. I am an Ambassador to the Holy See, but unfortunately, I am not addressed in Rome, I live in Stockholm, travelling here frequently, and also to La Valletta, in Malta, which is my other Ambassadorship.

I am a newcomer to this field, although, destiny has made me serve in several countries which are based on religion. I have been serving in Israel, in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and now I am Ambassador to the Holy See. Therefore, in a way, religion comes in my background, but I have not really ever been focused on the interfaith dialogue. That is why maybe my title is a little bit misleading, because I've heard that interreligious and interfaith dialogue are not exactly the same. To many people it is the same thing, but not to everybody. Not to make any mistake, what I am referring to is actually rather interfaith than interreligious. Therefore, this is my mistake as beginner, getting the vocabulary a little bit wrong.

I will start by making a few reflections on what cultural diplomacy is and what distinguished it

from traditional diplomacy. Then, I will move on to a practical example of interfaith dialogue, which I found in my own country, rather than looking to the places where I have served. I looked into a microcosm, in the Stockholm's suburbs, to see what this really could mean in practical terms. At the end, I will try to draw not some conclusions – that will be too far – but some thoughts about what you could learn from this micro-level dialogue and transform it to the micro-inter-state level, or even to the interregional or global level.

If you look at the whole field of diplomacy, the aims of traditional diplomacy and cultural diplomacy are different, because, in the traditional diplomacy, you negotiate in order to reach an agreement on a particular issue. I mean, how to divide a territory, or how to design a constitutional framework, or how to distribute resources, or how to reach a target for global warming, for example. In cultural diplomacy, and especially in the interfaith dialogue, the aim is to promote trust and achieve great understanding and it can never be a zero-sum game, so that your gain is my loss or vice versa. Moreover, you do not try to convince the other parts to change their minds or deep convictions. What you try to do is to clarify the issues and to find out what unites you. Then, you can also have to identify what divides you, what you do not agree with, and you need to find a way, through cultural diplomacy and interfaith dialogue, to manage these differences. You cannot negotiate such things as faith, so the traditional tools of diplomacy are not applicable. It is much more a long-term process the one we are talking about.

Therefore, successful cultural diplomacy is an ongoing process. It is a dialogue where the parts gradually are able to trust and deep their mutual understanding. Some of the salient features are that it is long-term, concrete results may take a

long time to materialize, and the practitioners of cultural diplomacy and interfaith dialogue have to be very patient. It also has to be transparent. There must not be any hint of hidden agendas. I mean, traditional diplomats sometimes retire in small rooms and make some backroom deals, and then come out presenting the results. This is something you cannot do in this kind of endeavour. Of course, you need small groups. You need to be confidential in order to move forward. Sometimes these things are better dealt outside the focus of the media and general public. Nonetheless, these efforts all the time have to remain as transparent as possible, and all the aspects of this dialogue as open as possible.

To cultural diplomacy and interfaith dialogue, I think, there is a strong cultural element: the cultural activities will reinforce and contribute to move the issue forward. So, the reading of literature, the listening of music, looking at art, studying history, religious texts, all these things play a crucial role in promoting mutual understanding. Consequently, the organization of exhibitions, concerts, readings, seminars, and conferences like this one are all tools in these endeavours.

In traditional diplomacy, government officials play the major role, they are the protagonists, but in cultural diplomacy and interfaith dialogue, the religious leaders and representatives of civil society, and – why not? – also scientists and artists are the main drivers of the process. Where we, the bureaucrats, can have a supporting role, but we are not in the front-line in this. It goes without saying that cultural diplomacy and traditional diplomacy are mutually reinforcing. Successful cultural diplomacy can contribute to reach the necessary level of trust and understanding that is the precondition for more political, economic, technical agreements to be concluded. Vice versa, solving matters through traditional diplomacy may pay the way to more openness and understanding about cultural and even spiritual and religious issues. Therefore, they reinforce each other, they are not mutually exclusive, and this goes both ways.

Cultural diplomacy and interfaith dialogue are necessary for promoting long-term and sustainable

international peace and security, but the diplomatic activities must not only take place at the highest levels. Without a solid foundation where the ideas of dialogue, understanding and mutual respect, the divisions that caused the tensions will remain.

Now, I come to the specific and concrete example. At the very basic level, I looked at my own country to see if I could find any good example. Recently, I visited a local community of interfaith dialogue in Stockholm's suburb called Fisksätra. In this particular community, about 40% of the population are Lutherans; about 40% are Muslims; and remaining 10% are mostly Catholics, but actually there are also some Buddhists and Hinduists in that community. The majority of the inhabitants have no-Swedish origins and many recently arrived to my country as refugees, with direct personal experiences of war, and political and religious persecution. Therefore, they can also come with some very deep wounds and psychological traumas from those experiences.

In this community, income levels are relatively low, unemployment is high, cultural clashes within the immigrant population, as well as between them and the Swedish society around them, happen and there are multiple social problems. Trying to manage these social issues in this suburb, the Church of Sweden, which is Lutheran, the Association of Muslims in Stockholm, and the Catholic Dioceses of Stockholm founded a centre of counselling and support called "The Source". It has been founded through a process of interfaith dialogue among these three main groups that, now, have a common mission statement. I will try to translate it and read it out for you.

It says, "Differences in religion, culture or ethnic background do not have to be divisive, but to rather stimulate inclusion and reach building. It is up to ourselves how to handle these differences. Culture and religion are not isolated from each other, but a point of departure, a solid foundation from which we shall meet life. With this concept as basis, "The Source" has managed to increase the awareness of the similarities as well as the differences of beliefs and thoughts, among the groups of this community. Of course, the basic similarity is the conviction that

there is one God, who created all human beings as equals and wanted them to leave in peace.”

With this intent, they started a reach variety of community initiatives. They have discussion groups; they help people to be in contact with local authorities; they have language training; they organize groups for parenting; they organize legal-assistance, healthcare; and, of course, there are religious services for the Christians in a Church, connected to the Centre for Muslims in the nearby Mosque. Now they have a vision to build a Mosque right next to the Church, the two buildings connected with a common community centre. This is, of course, still a dream, but it is doable. The drawings are already ready for the Mosque, actually, and the Church is already existing. If this comes to place, It will be a very unique centre, where you will see a concrete manifestation of interfaith dialogue. This is also a kind of cultural diplomacy in the suburban’s micro-level.

These concrete social activities that have been undertaking, have also been able to defuse potential conflicts, have increased mutual understanding and tolerance and enhanced the conditions of peace and harmony in the neighbourhood. Thanks to this dialogue, the parties have been able to move from the starting positions, through recognizing their interests and finally recognizing their common needs. Let me explain it a little bit more in detail.

We, as diplomats, are dealing with positions that we state in conferences. For example, we say that territory A historically belongs to us. That is the position and these are statements that are kind of written in the stone, they are untouchable. However, if you look behind the positions, you may actually find that there are some interests behind them. So, you try to find what that interest is and maybe you’ll find out that you want a specific

territory because there is a river that pass through it and you can use the river to drink the water or irrigate the fields or get energy from it. Then, you stretch it a little bit further and you see that yes, you look at the need for water, well, this need to drink it, to irrigate the fields and to get electricity is common to all the inhabitants in the area. They can be universal needs, because we all need to drink and eat. By the interreligious or interfaith dialogue and cultural diplomacy, you can have this kind of discussions, because the former positions about the territories are mutually exclusive (if territory A is mine, you have no access to it), but if you really talk about why you need them, why you need the water, you can come to a situation in which parties can discuss on how to share the water, and how to get the best out to it, for the common good.

If you can move from antagonistic statements or positions toward a situation in which you can jointly recognize each other’s needs and adopt practical solutions to solve these, you might achieve something that is really profitable and valuable for peace and reconciliation.

What happened in the community of Fisksätra, we can transform this into the higher level, and see how this practical cooperation can be developed and we can create a link with this local initiatives. I believe there are many local initiatives all over the world, actually and you can create link among them and what the politicians, statesmen and negotiators are doing at the international level. Then, we might be able to move forward.

In conclusion, positive actions at the micro-level should be matched by equally positive actions at the macro-level, and they should be mutually reinforcing and strengthen the efforts to achieve global peace and reconciliation. With this, I thank you so much for your attention. ●

Biography

H.E. Amb. Lars-Hjalmar Wide Ambassador of Sweden to the Holy See

Lars-Hjalmar Wide is currently Ambassador to the Holy See and Malta and previously Ambassador in Islamabad.

He has previously served at embassies in Havana, Madrid and Tel Aviv, and at the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations in New York.

Mr Wide has also held positions in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as head of the Americas Department, head of the former Department for Global Security and head of the Protocol Department.

Moreover, he has been Director-General of the Swedish Agency for Non-Proliferation and Export Controls and First Marshal of the Court at the Royal Palace.

“Education as a Key Policy for Inter-Faith Dialogue”

A Lecture by Senator Linda Lanzillotta (Vice President of the Italian Senat)

Rome; April 1st, 2014



Ladies and gentlemen, good morning and welcome!

I would like to say at the very outset that the Senate is proud to host a session of this important Symposium, and to do so in such a historic setting.

I would like to thank the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy for inviting me and to thank you – also on behalf of the President of the Senate – for choosing to hold today’s meeting in the Italian parliament. There is, I believe, a substantive reason why an important international conference on inter-faith dialogue is being hosted in the Senate. In our globalised world, inter-faith dialogue is a tool to build peace among peoples at international level, and – at the same time – to build security and social cohesion within individual countries. For this reason, construction of inter-faith dialogue is not a topic that can be confined to religious institutions: it should be the focus of policy-making and political action.

Starting from the year 2000, events have taken place which have changed the way life is led over this planet: the globalization of commodities and financial markets and the wider availability of technologies and the Internet have ushered in a new era. In the new millennium, the life-styles

of seven billion people (the total number of the earth’s population) are changing and for many of us considerable changes have already taken place. Globalisation has brought about sweeping social, environmental, economic and population changes. Italy is affected by these radical changes and, like the rest of Europe, is also a key player.

The Mediterranean Sea is the mare nostrum bordering countries with different cultures and religions. Historically, the Mediterranean was an area of contamination and intercultural integration, an integration which all too often in our history was the outcome of bloody conflicts. Over the past couple of decades, the Mediterranean was – and will continue to be – the stage of political upheavals, both for countries bordering the sea and for countries that see the Mediterranean as a way out from war and poverty. These upheavals produced and are still producing migration flows that bring masses of people to our coasts. To these people, Italy is called to provide dialogue, hospitality, tolerance and ability to understand diversity. Italy is the frontier of Europe. Its institutions must make an organisational and economic effort, its people a cultural effort. This is an effort we must share with the rest of Europe, knowing that immigration, for countries with a decreasing population, accounts for an important factor of economic growth. Policies to help migrants settle in are essential to prevent or tackle the risk of fundamentalism, which might be triggered or fuelled by social exclusion and poverty. This risk is even greater now that nationalism and xenophobia are returning or getting harsher.

But if religion can give rise to fundamentalism, religious culture as a universally unifying factor might provide a shared spirituality that can serve as a launch pad for dialogue and mutual understanding. Religion can be either a unifying factor or a source

of bloody conflict. Inter-faith dialogue and dialogue-building policies must make religions a positive factor for cooperation among people from different backgrounds, for integration and for social inclusion, knowing full well that religious intolerance can be consciously fuelled to become a powerful instrument of political hegemony and power.

During the last few decades, great progress was made in inter-faith dialogue among the great monotheistic religions, thanks to the efforts of their spiritual leaders. In this framework, I would like to recall the last important step in this direction: the 17 March meeting of leaders of the three monotheistic faiths during the Global Freedom Network. The meeting produced an agreement aimed at stemming modern forms of slavery and trafficking in human beings and at cracking down globally on these crimes. This is but one tangible example of what breakthroughs may be achieved if we open up to dialogue: an example also for policy-makers.

It is up to politicians and secular institutions – Governments, Parliaments, Regions and local government bodies that are closer to the public – to strengthen and disseminate the values of understanding diversity, tolerance and social inclusion. These values are the spawning ground for inter-faith dialogue. Schools and education providers in general are called to play an important role in forging tomorrow’s citizens, starting with preschool children. They must pave the way for the development of a civil culture founded on cultural and religious pluralism. It is through education that we become aware of the cultural milieus where

religions are rooted. This enables the young to learn the history, traditions and values of such cultures, and therefore to acknowledge their dignity.

Through education we understand the historical, philosophical and cultural bonds of religions: these bonds must be used to the full in order to enable understanding, mutual respect and dialogue. I would like to stress that education and the young are an important channel to spread a culture of tolerance, pluralism and inter-faith dialogue, also within families.

It is therefore very significant and important also for the future of inter-faith dialogue that Italy’s Prime Minister Matteo Renzi has put schools at the centre of his Government’s plan of action, by announcing sizable investments in school renovation and teacher training programmes. Schools will play a strategic role, not only in training students to live and compete in the society of knowledge and technological innovation, but also to make our citizens ready to live in the era of globalization.

Political institutions have a duty to render such principles as equal rights and antidiscrimination – which are enshrined in our Constitution – effective both in the work place and in society at large. These principles are a prerequisite for the development of the conditions for dialogue between people of different faith and culture. The outcome of this dialogue should be a shared notion of civil and constitutional values, which is the prerequisite for being one nation.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Biography

Senator Linda Lanzillotta
Vice President of the Italian Senate

Lanzillotta is both a manager and scholar. From 1970 to 1982 she worked at the Ministry of Budgeting and Economic Planning. She was a member of the Rome City Council between 1997 and 1999, and served as the Secretary General to the Prime Minister's office for one year between 2000 and 2001. She was a faculty member at the Roma III University from 2001 to 2005.

She was elected Minister for Regional Affairs and Local Communities in the cabinet led by Prime Minister Romano Prodi in May, 2006, where she stayed until 2008. She was a member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies for the Alliance for Italy, and became a member of the Italian senate in February, 2013 and she is currently serving as the vice-president of the senate.

In addition, she is the founder and president of GLOCUS, an independent think-tank which she established in 2007 to promote reformist policies in Italy.

"Religious Tolerance – 17 Centuries of the Milan Edict"

A Lecture by H.E. Amb. Mirko Jelic (Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the Holy See)

Rome; April 1st, 2014



Excellences, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

History that we all learnt and are all still learning is based on some rather straightforward principles. Usually there are dates, places, names followed by a description of events, of what preceded and what the consequences were. Not necessarily in that order, but somewhere along those lines. I'm not a historian maybe that is why it amuses me to see how some segments of not so recent history are brought to us in a very precise way, while some other of not so recent history are pretty sketchy. And we accept on both almost without any objection – most of us at least.

May I offer an example; ancient history and that of Rome particularly are examined in detail year after year from the birth of the internal city to the end of the classical era. And then things become a bit less orderly. The timespan for historical observation is much wider and when the history of my people and that of the region were really quite concerned for quite some time it goes by huge leaps through centuries – from the 7th to the 11th or even to the 12th century. Similar blanks were there in later history as well, filled occasionally

by great powers, empires of all kinds, conquerors that ravished through this part of Europe. And for all the troubles they caused and even more enrooted to last forever, they usually accused the people of the Balkans - usually in a cynical imperial way. Everybody remembers Sir Winston Churchill's statement that Balkans produces more history than they can consume. In spite of all that we managed to keep alive our own historic memory of events. Leaders or decisions that were important to us - against all odds. And Emperor Constantine the Great encompasses all things necessary for our historic memory.

When I chose the topic 'Religious Tolerance - 17 Centuries of the Milan Edict' I had to answer to the question what is so special about Constantine to be called the Great and to make him stand out after so many years? Of course there were other elements that played a significant role. First the fact, that to the author of the Edict, or co-author to be precise, together with Latzinis, Emperor Constantine was born in my country. But so were 16 other Roman Emperors, actually more Roman Emperors were born only in Rome itself. And 4 of those were born in the city of Niš, Naissus of those days.

Second, that just last year we just celebrated 1700 years of the promulgation of the Milan Edict and that whole of the year 2013 was in my country dedicated to the memory of Constantine with numerous cultural and religious events. From operas dedicated to the Roman Emperor to holy litigates is in honour, served by patriarchs, cardinals, archbishops, with high-level political presence in all occasions.

Decisive point was the fact that in Milan Edict, we have for the first time on European soil promulgation of religious tolerance. Emperor Constantine is the founder of a new era – an era of the establishment of


 International Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy & Religion - Rome, Italy; March 31st - April 3rd, 2014

religious freedom, as an integral part of basic human rights. And that document keeps that necessary time-span unbroken from antiquity to modern times. From the centuries that mark the sunset of the Roman Empire to the dawn of civilisation that we all are proud to be part of.

In the Edict of Milan, Constantine had mentioned that he gives freedom, free power of decision, to Christians and to all. So everyone could be the follower of the religion he wants or that everyone as he expresses himself later in his book is allowed to believe as his heart wishes. This Constantine's expression is of use to me as an incentive to point out the importance of the principle of religious freedom, in other words the respect of full religious freedom and freedom of conscience.

This principle we usually connect to modern times. Most of our contemporaries, even very well informed intellectuals think that the freedom of belief and the freedom of conscience are the achievements of the French Revolution and time afterwards. However we can see that it is Emperor Constantine who proclaimed this principle. Historians are trying to explain the coming of the Milan Edict in many different ways and I don't intend to venture into any of that. Simply because it all makes sense, but somehow omits to express the most important of all. There were all those centuries ago, many various documents signed by various Emperors and the very Emperor Constantine as well. But they had no central vision of bringing into the life of mankind, such radical changes that would enable the transformation of society and the world as a whole.

Only one - the edict of tolerance, from the year 3013 A.D., promulgated in the city of Milan, constituted foundation for the development of the modern time concept of the free will and the freedom of choice. Constantine didn't just sign one document, he by the power of his will and uncompromising decisiveness of the ruler forced his contemporary to respect and implement what was promulgated. His decision of ethical proportions let everybody believe as his heart tells him, lies in the foundation of all religious and civic liberties till our days. It appears that this quite broadminded message

civilised and consolatory ingenious was built into the very foundation of modern European culture and humanity.

In today's Serbia the 1700th anniversary of the edict of Milan, the Constantine anniversary was celebrated in a sign of victory of understanding and tolerance amongst people and religions. It is that part of the Edict of Milan that was given prominence and primary importance in numerous cultural and scientific events in the 2013 in my country. Thus it is not by chance that for the organization of the celebrations, all religious communities in Serbia took part. This communion is of utmost importance because it develops democratic achievements of the society. It strengthens mutual understanding among people and contributes to the promotion of tolerance. In his address to the guests of the central celebration of the 17th centuries of the Edict of Milan, the president of the Republic of Serbia pointed out that with this document the system of values was established, which since its adoption to the end of the world applies to every Christian and also to every human being regardless of religion.

Serbia is honoured that this anniversary is celebrated in our country as well. We still live by the principles of the Edict of Milan. Serbia's people have guaranteed freedom of confession or the right to follow and believe without being disturbed. This is not a demonstration of a culture of remembering but a true tribute to one of the greatest documents of civilisation, the president said.

Our history was not an easy one – not easy at all - neither the ancient, nor the recent one. Serbian people through centuries of existence faced numerous challenges. We have managed to overcome the most difficult situations and to survive physically, spiritually and remain faithful to our civilisation, religious and cultural roots. Without tolerance in dialogue there is no reconciliation and without lasting peace there is no regaining of confidence which is necessary to overcome the consequences of the conflicts in this part of Europe at the end of the last century.

Inter-faith dialogue allows the true hope and


 "The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"

reconciliation to return. Serbia is in this spirit with full respect for the serenity and territorial integrity and mutual respect among the region working to overcome the negative legacy of the past, building a just democratic and prosperous society. In the apostle of the Serbian Orthodox Church on the 1700th anniversary of the Edict of Milan on June 11th 2013 it is said about Constantine the great, that never did any Emperor before him and really any after him, raise the knowledge of god and the knowledge of man to such a level. For freedom is the foundation of the existence of all mankind. The Emperor knew and saw that force, neither helps one to believe or not believe just because someone decreased. He knew that no one society allows every citizen that which it's basic faith is sincerity of freedom. In his Edict Constantine was more modern and more noble than many of the rulers who came after him, or who govern today.

Freedom of religion is the foundation of all other values; of all civilisations and cultures, which consider value the respect for the human person and which live by it . We seek neither today nothing more nor less, than that the Roman Emperor and later Saint made clear 1700 years ago. But it is a basic fact that man needs to be free to believe and confess as his heart desires and his conscience dictates, hindered by no one. It was not so long ago that this was not possible. There are places not too far from us, where this is still not possible.

In the apostolically and cyclical Evangelical odium the joy of the gospel, his holiness Pope Francis said Evangelisation also involves the path of dialogue which opens the church to collaboration with other political, social, religious and cultures here. Ecumenism is an indispensable path to Evangelisation. Mutual enrichment is important. We can learn so much from one another.

In the book co-authored with the Arab Abraham Skorka called 'On Heaven and Earth' Pope Francis says dialogue is born from an attitude of respect for the other person. From a conviction that the other person has something good to say - it assumes that there is room in the heart of the person's point of view, opinion and proposal. The dialogue entails a

cordial reception not a prior condemnation. In order to dialogue it's necessary to know how to lower the defences, open the doors of the house and often human walls.

Ladies and Gentleman, comparing contemporary international protection of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and with the related right to freedom of opinion of expression the content of the Edict of Milan we can realize the exceptional closeness preserved in principal to insure religious freedom of every man, if he respects other peoples religiosity and this is done both with the individual and at the collective level – level of religious communities.

The first such international form of protection occurs in the universal declaration of human rights form in 1948, which in Article 8018 states that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscious and religion. Right includes freedom to change his religion of belief and freedom either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. His eminence Bishop of ... interprets the Milan Edict on an even broader scope. I quote 'Today we discuss Europe, its enlargement, foundations of its already given unity and recently tasks merging, its values and standards of culture and resources of that culture, the relation of general European identity and the identity of the nation's members of the European family, as well as other important topics. And it seems like we forget that the idea of Europe's unity – the idea of the universality of the Christian world – Ecumene, cultural world – ..., versus the unknown world of the Barbarian people's in different cultures, as well as the idea of the universal – the unity. Historically it is older far and away than the concept of a modern European Union and that a modern is in other words a trendy vision of a global village. We could even claim that the Ecumene of that time was in a certain way more comprehensive and more successful than today's European Union. It enclosed the whole wide Mediterranean basin on three continents. The biggest part of the European area, France, Asia and North Africa and in spite the existence of many

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different nations, languages, cults and cultures it manifested stronger spiritual and civilisation unity than the one that we in the beginning of Europe in the 21st century take as a praise work. 'End of quote.

Ladies and Gentleman, without tolerance and inter-faith dialogue there is no reconciliation and without lasting peace there is no regaining of confidence which is necessary to form the consequences of the numerous conflicts in many corners of the world. Many in the name of faith, at a first glance, rather paradoxical seems the fact that those who with the deepest sincerity participate in religious conflict, usually don't know the differences in teaching in whose name they fight and religious teachings against which they fight.

It is not difficult to reach conclusive evidences that the real reason of the conflicts is often something else and religious differences are simply used as an instrument. However it is quite disheartening that the differences in the religious affiliation are

recognized as a suitable tool for inducing fanaticism. It is particularly odd when this fanaticism is positioned against the values promoted in these religions – values such as tolerance, forgiveness, equality of man, fighting errors and pride etc. In the conclusions of the conference everlasting values and permanent actuality of the Edict of Milan placed in the city of Niš. It is sad. Correct understanding of the ideas of the Edict of Milan could significantly contribute to resolve some of the most complex issues of the contemporary man, such as absence of unrestricted right to religious freedom, jeopardising or insufficient protection of human rights, lack of social justice, permanent devastation of peace in the world.

Having in mind the importance and scope of the questions raised, all subjects of social life should act responsibly in the future integral dialogue - state institutions, churches and religious communities as well as organisations of the civil society.

Thank you •

Biography

H.E. Amb. Mirko Jelic

Amassador of the Republic of Serbia to the Holy See

Amb. Jelic was born in Zabreb on the 15th of October, 1949. He received a BA in Law from the University of Zagreb in 1973. In 1976 he became the Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of the SFR of Yugoslavia. From 1976 to 1980, he served as the Third Secretary, Embassy of the SFR of Yugoslavia in Greece. From 1980 to 1984 he was the Second and First Secretary, First Political Directorate, and Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of the SFR of Yugoslavia. From 1984 to 1988 he served as First Secretary in the Embassy of the SFR of Yugoslavia in Malaysia. From 1988 to 1991 he served as Counselor, First Counselor, Head of the Desk for Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, First Political Directorate, and Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of the SFR of Yugoslavia. From 1991 to 1994 he was Counselor for the Embassy of the SFR of Yugoslavia, and FR of Yugoslavia in the Republic of Korea. From 1994 to 1999 he served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 1999 to 2003 he was Minister Counselor in the Embassy of the FR of Yugoslavia/Serbia and Montenegro in Greece. From 2003 to 2004 he was the Deputy Director for Regional Initiatives in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro. From 2004 to 2005 he served as Foreign Policy Adviser of the President of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. From 2005 to 2009 he was the Ambassador of Serbia and Montenegro/Republic of Serbia in the Republic of Cyprus. From 2010 to 2011 he served as Ambassador and Director of the Department for Regional Organizations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia. From 2011 to 2012 he was the Deputy Assistant Minister for European Integration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia. Since November 9, 2013 he has served as Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the Holy See.

"The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"

"Exploring the Judaeo-Christian Scriptures - for Age-old Templates for Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue"

A Lecture by Auxiliary Bishop Pablo Virgilio S. David, Auxiliary Bishop of San Fernando, the Philippines

Rome; April 1st, 2014



Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I come from that part of the world, in the other side of the world, called the Philippines Islands, and I am happy to inform you that just last week the Philippine Government signed a peace-agreement with the Islamic communities in the Southern Philippines, in Mindanao. We like to believe that one of the factors that led to the success of this peace-agreement has been the close dialogue between the Ulamas and the Bishops in the Philippines. An interfaith kind of dialogue.

Like all of you, I think maybe I can relate with our aspirations, our dreams of demolishing the walls that divide humankind. I'd like to begin by presenting to you the symbol, the collapse of the Berlin wall in the formerly divided Germanies, probably one of the most unforgettable images of the basic human desire to break through the barriers of enmity that separate us from each other. People who watched the event on their television screens, 25 years ago, did not even need the commentary to understand what was taking place. The visuals were of Germans from the East and from the West hammering on

the same thick wall from both sides, all at the same time. I remember watching on the television how the first crack was met by a wild applause, then followed by the gaping little hole, allowing the news supporter's cameras to bear through to give the viewers focused clips of the unspeakable excitement written on the faces of the people, on the other side of the wall. Finally, one last solid blow saw the hated wall tumbling down, allowing the long separated siblings from the East and from the West to meet and greet each other in tearful embraces. Through our television's monitors from different corners of the world – I don't know from which part of the world you saw that news – we knew somehow that we were watching a significant break-through in human civilization. Something more significant than the Apollo 11 landing on the moon.

With apologies to the people of other faiths represented here today, who may have other scriptures to draw wisdom from, allow me to draw some reflections from the writings, which I have been nurtured with. I happened to be basically a biblical scholar, a professor of hermeneutics, namely the Judeo-Christian scriptures or simply the Bible.

I hoped to share what I consider Age-old Templates for intercultural and interfaith dialogue, that for me represent the deep and common human aspiration to break through cultural and religious walls that divide us. We can shift metaphors and perhaps propose to picture instead of walls, chasms or gaps that keep us apart and this, by the way, is the alternative image or imagery that is used by the parable told by Jesus about the rich man and the poor man Lazarus, the poor beggar. Well, you know probably the story and I refer you to the

gospel of Luke, Chapter 16. It is about a rich man who dressed in purple and fine linen, simply ignored a poor beggar by his gates. They both died and in the afterlife, there was a reversal of fortunes. The reversal of fortunes that the two men experienced in the afterlife prompted the formerly rich man to beg Abraham. In reply, Abraham is supposed to have told the rich man: "between you and us, a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us". The story suggests that we will drag with us in to the afterlife the chasms that we have built in this life.

Let me then proceed to propose five templates from the Bible. The first template is the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in the gospel of John, chapter 4. The second is again an encounter between Jesus and a foreign woman, a Syro-Phoenician woman, again an example of some kind of interfaith dialogue. The third one is the interfaith encounter between a Syrian military official named Naaman, the Syrian Leper and his Israelite slave girl in the second book of Kings, chapter 5. The fourth one is about Abraham and Three strangers who were angels in incognito and the last one is about Babel and Pentecost. Well, let me proceed immediately to the first template: Jesus and the Samaritan woman.

I don't know if you are familiar with the story of the encounter. There is an imaginary kind of barrier that is put between them. Jesus happens to be very thirsty and he talks to the woman and says "would you please give me a drink?" and the woman puts up here defenses and she says "you are a Jew I'm a Samaritan there is some kind of religious diversity here. You don't talk to me I don't talk to you, because we have nothing to do with each other. You are a man, I'm a woman, as well, so there even is the gender barrier". Straight from the gospel itself, we know that the Jews didn't have to or share anything with the Samaritans. This is not very different from the barrier between Roman Catholicism and Protestant Christianity.

The Judaism and Samaritan faith are actually very close and related to each other, but at some point,

there was a sort of ban between the two of them. The woman immediately puts up her defenses and she says: "The Jews do not share anything in common with Samaritans. How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?". She reminds him of their disparity of faith and culture, not to mention disparity of gender. In reply, Jesus invites her to imagine herself in a situation in which their roles reverse. What if she is the one in need of a drink and he even without a glass would figure out a way to offer her a drink from a free flowing. Of course Jesus speaking from a different plane, shifting to a figurative level of discourse. Well, the implication is that People of whatever faith, culture, or gender, inevitably meet each other to draw water from a common source, despite their differences. Although they use different clothes, speak different languages and come from different parts they nevertheless share common experience of thirst, a common thirst for life's meaning and purpose. The entry point of Jesus for dialogue is an invitation for the woman to see in the person before him not someone who is different, but someone who, like any other human being, is in constant quest not just for a drink which will satisfy physical thirst, but more importantly, one that will quench the spiritual thirst.

The woman is familiar with this kind of thirst, but then again she suddenly reminds of their differences, according to which, they were expecting to draw water from different sources. She says "you worship in your Jerusalem Temple and I worship in Mount Gerizim" but Jesus replies with an eschatological dream. He says: "Woman believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth." Thereby, Jesus prophesies a time when humankind will learn to draw again from a common spiritual source, which he calls worship and spirit and truth. Well, the expressions spirit and truth sound nebulous, no doubt, but here lies precisely what is most revolutionary about the Christian tradition, began by Jesus, which is the instinct to identify the essence of worship and spirit and truth with love. Could there

be anything more universal, more transcendental than the common experience of love? So radically has Christian tradition embraced this conviction that it has summed up in love or in its notion of divinity. The whole Law and the Prophets are supposed to find their fulfillment in the love of God and in the love of neighbors one selves.

In the Christian Scriptures, in the letter of John, he said plainly, "God is Love". Henceforth, we must learn to look at what is most Godly, not in religious rituals but in the basic human instinct to give oneself unconditionally. And to find in this very dynamics the fulfilment of one's humanity. This is what Jesus the Jew invited his fellows, Jews, to find the very heart of Judaism, that all the Torah should be summed up by the command to love God above all and to love one's neighbor as oneself.

Second template. Jesus and the Syro-Phoenician Woman. Well, this is again a story about a woman of another faith, asking for a favour from Jesus because her daughter was sick and dying. She comes to Jesus with the request that he prays over the daughter so she could get well. What the woman gets is a very chauvinistic reply, especially from the disciples of Jesus, and, later on, from Jesus himself, because, to her shock, Jesus himself said, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs". Very insulting, but the woman does not take the remark offensive. Rather, she responds with a sentence that both embarrasses and amazes Jesus, who shifts to a self-correction. He realizes he was mistaken. The woman says, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." She was just asking for crumbs. Her readiness to swallow an apparent affront to her personal dignity for the sake of her daughter who was suffering, touches Jesus to the core and moves him to satisfy her request. In Matthew's version of basically the same story, we were told that Jesus is supposed to have this claim to the woman, "O Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." I wonder what faith Jesus was talking about, because in that case there was precisely a disparity of faiths.

This woman was gentle, she didn't profess faith in

this rely to religion. I proposed her for the Jesus' amazement that had nothing to do with the woman's faith or her ardent hope for the cure for her daughter, but rather her love, which made her strong enough to endure rejection and insult with humility, only to have the crumbs of grace that she begged for, on behalf of her daughter. Paul himself of Tarsus had said something to this effect in his timeless sermon of love, in 1 Corinthians 13, he says, "If I have faith strong enough to move mountains, but have no love, I gain nothing. "He prefaces this whole chapter in love, with an exhortation to see what he calls a "more excellent way". He had earlier spoke about a spiritual gifts in chapter 12, and he here speaks about the grater gifts and he says, "the excellent gifts are three. The gifts that remain are Faith, Hope, and Love, but the greatest is not faith. The greatest gift is not even hope, but it is love". This is Paul's way to telling the reader "you may lose your faith, or even hope, but as long as you don't lose love you are not hopeless". It's when you lose love that you lose God, because God is love. Paul goes to the rock bottom of believing and hoping, namely the loving. He has personally find this love in Jesus who responded to rejection, hatred, persecution with forgiveness. The implication of the God – love equation is that Goodness has to be located not in religion lessens, nor even in atheism nor agnosticism, but rather in loveliness. We may have miss the point ourselves, we all call ourselves Christians and with Christianity all new religion among other religions. In our own failure to love we may have ended up with the faith funded not on rock but rather on the sand of sophism in Ancient Greek history, the sand of dogmatism and zealotry that equates evangelization sometimes with proselytism.

Even Mahatma Gandhi was supposed to have been drawn by the teachings of Jesus in the Scriptures. He is supposed to have replied to a journalist who asked if he rejected the Christian religion. He said, "Oh, I don't reject your Christ. I love your Christ. It's just that so many of you Christians are so unlike your Christ."

The original Christians were Jews, who were asked to see in Christ's person the foundation of being

a Jew. It was for this very reason that he did not require those of other religions to become Jews in order to profess Christ. To profess Christ for him was to profess love. The love that has become so luminously manifest in the man who only taught to his disciples to follow his example of loving, not just those who could love us back, but rather to extend it even to the enemies, even to one's persecutors. We were supposed to find what is most subliming us a scripture of God's image and likeness, not in the quest for power, but in the capacity for total self-emptying. It is our capacity for unconditional loving that reveals the face of God.

Third template, Naaman, the Syrian Leper & his Slave Girl. Well, this is an interesting story and an interfaith story as well, because the Leper is not an Israelite either and does not adhere to the Israelite religion, but he goes to the prophet and seeks healing. He feels insulted because the response of the prophet is going and wash yourself seven times in the river Jordan. The Syrian Leper, the man who is afflicted by Leprosy, gets angry and he goes away because he is a military commander and he said, "I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy!" He was of course not aware that the prophet is bound by the Torah not to have any physical contact with him because of his leprosy. By name and then by reverse back to his chauvinism, let his burst ego speak out "Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" He was so upset that he would have declared the war against the king of Israel if the slave girl and the fellow servants not interceded with him. It was a little girl who said to him, "Father if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult wouldn't you have done it? How much war when all he said of you or to you was wash and be clean?" and of course the commander would listen to the girl. You see, only children can somehow pierce the bubbles of human powerplay.

Remember the child in the story about "The Emperor's New Clothes", who was the only one who

could verbalize the truth state of the pretentious king and say "but the king is naked!". Indeed, only children can see through the nakedness of human pride and quest for power, which is perhaps the most common cause of division, class segregation, and discrimination among people. No other than Jesus said "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." Then, he reinforced his message with the gesture by taking a little child and putting it in their midst and taking it in his arm.

The fourth template, Abraham and the three strangers. You are familiar probably with this, because this is for example just one of the many texts in the Bible about welcoming God among the strangers. The virtual welcoming of the strangers finds its truth in the story about the childless couple of Abraham and his wife, Sarah, welcoming strangers who and thereby being rewarded with the child. This tradition is not unique to either the Judaism or Christianity as many other parallel versions, even in Greek and Roman mythology, where we encounter similar narratives about Gods and Goddesses disguised the strangers.

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me" so says Jesus in Matthew, 25, but in the last judgement the divine judge is supposed to say this.

The last template is from the God induces confusion on Babel to the spirit facility that communication of Pentecost, it is the aspiration for power that breaks us apart. We were told about people aspiring to build a tower with its top in the heavens with the objective of making a name for themselves. This, according to the story, is what divided humankind and, of course, in the New Testament of the bible, there is some kind of a prophecy that this is going to be reversed eventually. The first experience of it is called Pentecost, the coming of the tongues of fire, when people of many different nations and languages started to speak a common language again.

Let me end with this: The Utopian dream of unity and diversity. I know that the word Utopian is coming to a sure pejorative sense, something that exist only in the world of imagination. I beg to restore the

term utopian, but not just the term utopian, but imagination in its rightful place, not allowed to be equated to unreality. It was Thomas Moore, who introduced the term utopia in our vocabulary. One of the beautiful eschatological passages in the book of the prophet Isaiah is a dream that has been engraved in the United Nations Headquarters, on the façade. "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, one nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more". Furthermore, in Isaiah 11, he says, "

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

Thank you ●

Biography

Auxiliary Bishop Pablo Virgilio S. David Auxiliary Bishop of San Fernando, the Philippines

Auxiliary Bishop Pablo Virgilio Siongco David was born on March 2nd, 1959 in Betis, Guagua, and Pampanga. He was ordained a priest on March 12th, 1983. Pope Benedict XVI appointed him Auxiliary Bishop of San Fernando on May 27th, 2006. He was ordained Bishop on July 10th, 2006.

After attending courses at the Mother of Good Counsel Seminary in San Fernando, he studied Theology and he received a Master in this subject at the Loyola School of Theology. He got Licentiated in Sacred Theology from the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium. He also attended the Ecole Biblique et Archeologique Française de Jerusalem. Afterwards, he received his doctorate in Sacred Theology at the Catholic University of Louvain.

He has developed a broad career in the education field. He was the Director of the Philosophy Department at the Mother of Good Counsel Seminary in San Fernando. In 1996 he became the Spiritual Director of the same department. In 2006 he became the Director of Formation at the Mother of Good Counsel Seminary in San Fernando.

"Austrian Initiatives in the Field of Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue"

A Lecture by MP Reinhold Lopatka (Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of the Austrian People's Party in the National Council)

Rome; April 1st, 2014



Thank you very much for the warm welcome. It is a great honour and pleasure for me to speak to you today and to speak after Dr. Busek. To begin with I would like to thank the team of the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy for all the valuable work you are doing and for convening this forum.

I think the value of cultural diplomacy is an essential soft power tool of international relations and its fully recognized today and the efforts of the Institute have been instrumental in getting us to despond bringing together people and ideas and fostering this dialogue which is necessary and supporting and developing these efforts, through academia and research.

I think over the last decades we have witnessed immense and rapid change in the way we interact with one another- especially, the younger generation – both on an individual level as well as on a global level. I think technological advancement has brought about vast transformative change. This quick rise of data, Facebook, Twitter, this instant and permanent interconnectedness of billions of people through the internet has had a profound impact on our societies and Dr. Busek was speaking of the global village. I think global village is reality, especially in

the world of internet. And this change has also left its mark on international relations, as I see it. While there certainly remains a place of traditional form of diplomacy, the role of nations and the role of the nation state have receded and the impact on non-state actors, as I see it on international relations, has risen considerably.

Through this connectedness of Internet everybody can be a journalist; everybody can become an actor and play his role on the international stage. And I think, here politics and politicians lost influence, and we can talk about this if it is good or bad. I think if it's possible to involve a lot of people, how we want to organize our future, it is positive. But on the other hand individuals can have unforeseen consequences and can produce unforeseen consequences if they start to bring ideas in the world which are against common values. And so I think it is not easy to involve on the one hand common people in these worldwide chances of internet and it's not always easy from the political side to react and to bring especially in the internet community, values and that people respect each other.

As I see it, it's not a question about who is right and who is wrong, whose beliefs are true and whose are not. Sometimes things are not simply white or black. I think it's not about imposing or set out how we see different beliefs. There can be many right ways. Each one right for the individual who chooses to follow it and we have to choose to respect it. We do not have to agree on everything, but we should do everything to communicate in a peaceful way and to learn especially in this new media to respect one another. Even when we disagree and I agree with Dr. Busek I can't find this way especially in the new Medias - especially if we disagree. And I think this is the role of this inter-faith dialogue, this is the role of the dialogue between politicians and

people from the civil society. To develop respect for those who are not members of our own group, who are not members of the group of the politicians, who are not members of religious group and to find a way by speaking with them to see them as fellow human beings and if you see them only as nameless, faceless example in a strange group whose beliefs are different from ours, then you have the problems. And I think it's very important to have meetings like this and to look for these values and I think it's a basic human nature to value members of other groups less than we value members of our own. So psychological research demonstrates this and history shows this, but it is also a part of human nature that we tend not to inflict suffering on those who we consider fully human – those we come to see and value as individuals like ourselves, even if they are not part of our group, if we disagree with them. So I think dialogue is very important to bring us together.

And now I want to turn on the national level, that a national state and politicians play here a peak role and we should try to do our best to play this role. So I want to mention some concrete Austrian initiatives and maybe Austria is typical bringing different cultures together. You know about our geographic location and centuries of experience of multi-ethnic environment - also forced after the Second World War to be a neutral country between the former western and eastern blocks. So Austria tried to build up Austria as a centre of dialogue and bridge building and facilitating this peaceful coexistence. And global trust-building is very important in Austrian society. So the dialogue of cultures has been a priority in Austrian foreign policy for many years and Austria has taken on a pioneering role in fostering intercultural and interreligious dialogue. We started very early with this dialogue. Austrian dialogue initiatives were always designed to promote democracy, universal respect for human rights and basic human freedoms - including of course religious freedoms. We started this dialogue in the 80s and in the 90s. Dr. Busek already mentioned Kardinal König, who started a number of initiatives together with Austrian politicians and together with the Austrian government. And this includes the international

Christian-Islamic conferences organized under the auspices of the St. Gabriel Institute of Theology and these dialogues were entitled 'Peace for Humanity' or 'One World for all'. And we had a lot of round tables not only in Vienna at that time for example in Teheran and in other cities. And then we had a lady as a foreign minister, Ursula Plassnick, she established a task force dialogue of cultures within our ministry for foreign affairs and this task force still engages to develop this dialogue and to support different forums for dialogue.

And so this force work has the goal of promoting basic human freedom and rights worldwide and especially the fight against prejudice and misunderstanding and the promotion of cross-border cooperation between young leaders from areas in society. And so we tried to find new partners for example one of these new partners was the Arab-European Young Leaders Forum. We organized meetings not only in Vienna but for example also in Kairo, worked together with the Arab-league secretariat, bringing together young leaders, young politicians from Europe, from the civil society, from the business community and the Arab World. And Austria has also a long tradition, I don't know if it's known here. 100 years ago we had the first law of Islam in Austria, inside the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Islam was already recognized as an official religion in Austria as early as 1912, so for more than 100 years we had the legal framework and now we try to bring this law forward and to establish a new law for the Muslim-faith community in Austria. And also on the international level we try to engage other countries in this dialogue.

Yesterday a former colleague of mine and a former minister of Austria Claudia Bandion-Ortner who is also here today, she's now working in the King-Abdullah Center for inter-religious and intercultural dialogue in Vienna. An international organisation inaugurated in 2012, which also serves as a platform for new initiatives, a meeting place for religious leaders and a helpful exchange between cultures. It was founded by the Kingdom auf Saudi Arabia and the governments of Spain and Austria. And so you see a small country like Austria has here a chance to

do a lot for this dialogue and even in these days our new government tries to continue with this work.

So coming to an end I would say while inter-faith dialogue brings different beliefs and different views together it also gives us the opportunity to see that we have values which are shared by all man-religions. And I think this is very important. This belief is expressed in one way or another by all these major world religions as I see it. Which also

depict humanity as originated from one creator. You may disagree about the exact nature of our creator but we are all in equal part of creation and so I think there's a lot of chance for this inter-faith dialogue and you should continue with this work. We try also from the Austrian side to engage the European Union in this dialogue and of course politicians can't do it alone so I think institutions like yours are very important to continuing this work.

Biography

MP Reinhold Lopatka

Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of the Austrian People's Party in the National Council

Mr. Reinhold Lopatka is an Austrian politician of the ÖVP, and since December 2013 is the Chairman of the parliamentary group of the Austrian People's Party in the National Council. After studying Law and Theology at the University of Graz, he became very active within different ÖVP student organizations. Ultimately, he was elected to the Styrian Landtag.

In 2002, he managed the National campaign for the federal ÖVP. In the parliamentary election, the ÖVP gained significant votes (15.2% more than in 1999) and is therefore the strongest club in the National Council. After this significant victory, Mr. Lopatka was appointed as the Secretary General of the ÖVP. In the same year he was elected deputy for the National Assembly.

"The Religion in the Mediterranean Area"

A Lecture by The Hon. Sandro Gozi (Member of the Italian Parliament)

Rome; April 1st 2014



Thank you for inviting me to address you on this very important issue of religion and the role of religion in the Mediterranean.

Thinking about the history of Mediterranean Sea I hardly imagine another area more involved in conflicts, fights and wars. History teaches us that since ancient time's populations have tried to conquer Mediterranean in order to impose the rule over both seaside the European and the African, not to mention the Middle East. Has the Mediterranean been only a theater of bloody violence? I do not think so. Crossings of seas brought not only wars. Since ancient history, ships sailings from Cartago to Rome, from Gibraltar to Piraeus, from Marseilles to Istanbul, were formidable vehicles of exchange of ideas. Ideas' spread in the whole Mediterranean sea, has represented for centuries the lymph of new societies. Among these ideas, religion occupied a key position and it was also thanks to religion that dialogue among populations and nations has been able to continue during the time. I don't want to be misunderstood. Many wars and battles have been fought due to religious motivations, but we will make a terrible mistake if we consider only the negative aspects of the interaction based on religions in the Mediterranean Sea.

What I want to say is that Mediterranean is not only Lepanto. It is something else, something more. Mediterranean represents the cultural space in which religion have found a new path to improve peace and dialogue, even if it has not only always been very easy. Our history is full of examples of men and women, Christian, Muslim, Jewish that have crossed that path providing a decisive effort to strengthen peaceful and non-violent relations.

And we come to the present. I would dare that you have to believe in interreligious and inter-cultural dialogue. There are many examples of these. I could pick two of them. I would choose the historical meeting between Pope Paul VI and the Patriarch of Constantinople Atenagora, in 1964 in Jerusalem. This image does not represent only a historical testimony, but it will leave again next month, in May, when Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew will take another step to the path of ecumenism. I would also, as an Italian, choose the image of Assisi and that global interreligious dialogue promoted by John Paul II. These events are images of exceptional moments, but how can we translate directly the embrace between Francis and Bartholomew, today, as well as Paul VI and Atenagora, fifty years ago? This is the point. How in politics and in civil society can we cooperate in building the peace, especially in a Region, such as the Mediterranean, which is extremely complex and cannot be framed in a unique context.

I could say what would politics, in my view, should do in the national and European level. I would say that we should certainly focus on education. We should make it a vehicle for learning about religious and cultural identities and transmitting the knowledge of the other. We should start from primary schools. Inter-cultural and interreligious dialogue should start from primary schools of both sides of the Mediterranean. I understand it is very difficult but

we should start from our side and it is not a new idea. I already worked on it when I was responsible for the inter-cultural dialogue in the Mediterranean, ten years ago. Those ideas were good ten years ago and are still good today, but we should start to implement them.

We should promote mobility and exchange between schools and universities. I still believe in it and during our semester of Presidency at the European Union, we, as Italian government, will try to launch again the idea of Erasmus programs in the Mediterranean area. In fact, we are firmly convinced that these exchange projects could work as they have worked within the European Union. We should use media as a vital instrument of equality and mutual knowledge, not considering them as part of the problem.

If we fail into investing in culture now, there will be the danger that culture and religion will be part of the most retrograde and criminal aims. If, on the other hand, we all resolve to commit this challenge, we will form a human community united by a common destiny in a global world. With this aim, we should also revise fundamental policies of the EU, such as the neighborhood policy, which certainly has not produced the results that could have produced and certainly should be focused much more on the cultural and educational aspects.

I really believe that we need two or maybe three elements of same relevance. The first is the strength of faith for the believers or the goodwill for the non-believers. The second is the mind-openness: the stronger will our faiths and goodwill be, the greater our mind will be open, and vice versa. Let me explain this. Religion is such an important feature of our individual identities than any other human passion, i.e. politics, national interest and economics. We could have the chance to enhance the three of them, instead in the Mediterranean area we are experiencing the opposite: religion is exploited to pursue different goals. This is unacceptable. In the current globalized world must much more people are turning their eyes to the religion, looking for inspiration and aid. We have to protect these people. We cannot allow them to fall in the hands of fundamentalists rising over the

Mediterranean Region. Fundamentalists from all the religions that clearly represent a danger for all the women and men who approach religion instead of using weapons. In this respect, the Mediterranean area can provide a fundamental response to many challenges we are currently facing. This is the crucial point to understand: we cannot think that the answer to Mediterranean problems would come from Europe alone. It would be presumptuous. Nonetheless, I strongly believe that Europe could play a decisive role in promoting inter-cultural and interreligious dialogue.

I sincerely expect that all the decision-makers will do any effort, explore any road, in order to strengthen the communication, lower the differences and find the common points where there are misunderstandings. Since they form two wings of one area, it is clear that there is an urgent need for Europe and its Mediterranean neighbors to combine their complementary assets. After all, these two parts of the Euro-Mediterranean area are, in different ways and for different reasons, facing parallel problems of internal reorganization in a changing world. For this reason, we need to build this path together. General agreement on the aim of build a common civilization beyond the legitimate diversity.

One of the path to improve dialogue could exactly be the idea of religions as root to promote humanity and peace. It is not easy. We will fight the position of many whose interests are of pursuing violence and conflicts. We could count on religions and goodwill even in the most dangerous contexts.

Let me conclude by quoting a holy man, Saint Augustine, who wrote "Faith stays in what you do, not in what you see"

Thank you very much.

Biography

The Hon. Sandro Gozi Member of the Italian Parliament

Sandro Gozi is an Italian politician and Member of the Parliament of Italy. He was elected to the Italian Chamber of Deputies in 2008, as a representative of the Democratic Party. He was born in Sogliano al Rubicone in 1968 and went on to receive a BA in Law from the University of Bologna. In 1995 he received a D.E.A. in International Relations from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques-Paris, and finished a PhD in Public Law at the University of Bologna. He also has a Master's in International Politics from the ULB in Brussels.

Mr. Gozi was re-elected member of the Italian Parliament under the XVI legislature in the region of Umbria-From 2006 and 2008, he was Chairman of the Parliamentary Oversight Bicameral Committee on the Implementation of the Schengen Agreement, Europol and Immigration Affairs. He was also member of the I Commission (Constitutional Affairs), as a replacement for former President Romano Prodi, and the XIV Commission.

He was the elected President of the Federalist Intergroup for the European Constitution and general vice-secretary of the European Democratic Party. In 2005 and 2006, he was also member of the electoral committee for the election campaign of Romano Prodi.

In 2008 he was nominated the group leader of PD at the Commission for European Union politics. Furthermore, he filled the following positions: President of the Committee responsible for examining the EU policies, Co-President of the Federalist Intergroup for the European Constitution, President of the parliamentary group of Friendship Italy-India and member of the bicameral Committee Schengen, Europol.

In 2009, Sandro Gozi became the political coordinator of the Mozione Marino in Emilia Romagna. The same year, he became the person responsible, at the national level, for the political and institutional relationships and the communication of the Mozione Marino.

In 2010 he was elected vice-president of the liberal PD. He was also put in charge of the PD European policies.

"The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"

A Lecture by Sen. Lucio Malan (Member of the Italian Senate)

Rome; April 1st, 2014



Thank you Chairman, it has been an honour for me to have been invited to such an important meeting. As member of the board of the Senate, I welcome you to this ancient and historical room that hosted many important events, both national and international.

This is a very important day and the one we are discussing here is a very important issue. Conflict is normal in nature. Although we like to see harmony in the kingdom of nature, we know it is full of conflicts. Mankind attempt has been the one to change this order, this chaotic order, towards the harmony, and religions have played important roles in that attempt. Sometimes successfully, sometimes in other directions and sometimes even religions have taken part in these conflicts or they have been important parts of these conflicts. There are conflicts among ideologies, people, parties, countries, while the dialogue, the search for something that unifies mankind, something that is above or within mankind, should be something that leads our hearts and our souls to a better harmony and to a better understanding of each other.

From time to time, people have said that religion

is the fault of conflicts. Still today, there are people saying that the problem are the religions, because the most cruel wars and persecutions have been among religions or even within religions. That is not true. In the past century, we have seen that the very worst conflicts, the very worst persecution have been put in action and implemented by atheistic regimes, such as communist regimes or the national-socialist regime, in Germany, the fascism. Somebody has pointed at the fact that monotheism, that today is by far dominant - although not unanimous, but dominant among religions - has been in a way a reason for conflict among religions or people, because has long one recognizes the existence of many Gods there is the potential for a better tolerance, while when you think that there is only one God, and this one God is yours, the one of the others must be the wrong one. And that is not true either, because in times of polytheism there were many religious conflicts. Just to give an example, the Roman Empire was very tolerant - so to say - with other religions or Gods of other people, other religions. In the Roman Empire there were important temples of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses, and of Divinities from Persia or other parts of the world. Nevertheless, Romans have been the first, for instance, to persecute systematically and very cruelly and to try to completely eliminate the Jews. So, polytheism is not the route either of tolerance or intolerance among religions and the same is, of course, for monotheism, because knowing there is one God, it should - and often does - remind everybody that God is only one. From this point of view, my God is also the one of other people, so they are equal.

Some other people say that atheism is the key because without Gods there will not be any other religious conflicts, but there will still be conflicts

of other kinds. The very root of the problem of conflicts, whether they are among religions or other kind of divisions that mankind has invented, is within a person's soul or heart or mind. That's the root of violence. That's the root of intolerance. That's the root of conflicts and destructive confrontations. I think that a very important step towards dialogue was written in 1948 with the Universal declaration of Human Rights. This document recognized the freedom of religion, the equality of all men and women. It promoted and was the fundament of the United Nations, an organization that was and is currently supposed to stop and prevent conflicts. It hasn't always worked, but it does promote the dialogue among people.

The problem is that this declaration is remaining partially only written in the official documents and not in the hearts of people, especially leaders both religious and political or from other kind of entities in the world. This is not enough, so the dialogue among religions and religious leaders is really important. The very fact that religious leaders meet each other publically with kind words and attitudes, one towards the others, is a very important message to the people, because you see very often that sometimes in past, leaders have been the ones who promoted, in some cases, hate and people were dragged to enter in conflicts because their leaders were calling them to holy wars, to the extermination of the others. On the contrary, when leaders friendly meet, even if they disagree on many things, that is an important message, even if the reciprocal understanding is not as deep as one would like or as deep as it has been said. In addition, more there is the possibility of dialogue and reciprocal understanding, the memory of the past conflicts should be not a reason to start or to continue current conflicts, but to understand how either useless and full of dangers, death and pain this conflicts are.

Now, Europe tries and thinks to be the teacher of tolerance. For instance, in the Chart of EU we have beautiful words, very similar to the ones that compose the UN Declaration on Human Rights. On the other hand, we don't have any good records in the past. We have centuries and centuries, even millennia of religious and political conflicts. So, it is not the past that teaches us something, but it is what we are ready to do for the future, to forget about conflicts and to go towards a reciprocal comprehension. Reciprocal comprehension means that everyone has to have his opinion. Very often, in the Western world dialogue is seen as something that we don't believe in much. Let's listen to the others. Anyway, this is not really dialogue, but listening, which is a good thing but if you don't have your opinion there is not dialogue. There is just one direction which sometimes generates reactions within, even in Europe we have some kinds of movements, extremisms that want to go back to the times of conflicts and intolerance. We have to contrast them and to be together, like here, with people coming from so many countries, many religious, spiritual and personal backgrounds. This is a very important message and asset to share, to develop and to increase.

I am very honoured to be here, to have been invited here at the Senate where I am every day, but this is something exceptional, probably something that happens once in the all life of the Senate to have such an important moment. It is a big challenge for everyone of us to make the best of this meeting and of all the spirit and goodwill that we have here. So I wish to everyone of you to make the best of this meeting and to meet again in order to see the progress we have done, looking for new goals of harmony and reciprocal understanding with the wish to grow together within ourselves and in the societies of the all world.

Biography

Senator Lucio Malan
Member of the Italian Senate

Lucio Malan was born on the 30th of July, 1960. He is an Italian politician. Malan was born in Luserna San Giovanni, Turin. He earned his BA in Literature at the University of Turin, and went on to obtain a Master's degree in History at University of Nevada Las Vegas, where he was also an assistant-tutor.

Lucio Malan is member of the People of Freedom Party. From 1994 to 1996 he was a deputy, and since 2001 he has been a Senator and Secretary of the presidency of the Italian government. He is also a member of NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Lucio Malan is a member of the Waldensian Evangelical Church. From 1990 to 1998 he was guest speaker of Italian History and Culture at University Studies Abroad Consortium in Turin, Italy. From 1998 to 2008 he has been the director of communications of Forza Italia Party.

"Religions: the key to spread the culture of human rights"

A lecture by Sen. Ivana Simeoni (Member of the Italian Senate)

Rome; April 1st, 2014



Thank you all for being here.

Our presence at this meeting is a concrete act that reveals the willingness to listen and share ideas in order to work towards the ambitious goal of World Peace.

Along with man's innate tendency to aggregate and live in communities, he has also showed an instinct to dominate his fellow.

Although we try to justify this instinct as necessary for survival, we must note that it, in its many forms - oppression, exploitation, persecution and enslavement - never ceased as society progressed.

Those who are responsible for causing pain and sorrow are men that lack any empathy towards others, stuck in superficial bias against other cultures, races and religions.

Man's self-awareness and reason set him apart from the animal world.

These abilities have evolved in history through the philosophical and religious thought.

Philosophy and religion are often intertwined to address issues that science cannot fathom. Faith and belief are constants throughout history of culture. Men have resorted to these concepts as a way of recognizing that there is something beyond the physical world.

From idolatry to monotheism, men have tried to

give themselves answers in order to understand the meaning of existence.

This quality is a part of all human being and we can never ignore it. Having faith and the search for the meaning of existence are cultural, philosophical and religious elements that most of men consider important.

The pursuit of truth and the search for the meaning of life are paramount to all men; the more we realize this, the easier it will be to achieve a peaceful co-existence, across all cultural variances.

Regardless of religious beliefs, I am of the opinion that all human beings have a soul, and a sensitivity which can allow them to show empathy and kindness.

The context we grow up in is, for good or for bad, fundamental in determining our personalities and attitudes.

The cultures and religions of the world have the responsibility to forge souls, and the sensitivity of individuals who make up the community either social or religious.

All religions created by mankind preach brotherhood, respect for other cultures, and to consider what is different not as a threat, but as an asset.

The exaltation of differences has always produced the rise and the development of nationalisms and fanaticisms, ideologies which undermine the social equilibrium, and contrast the individual's dignity and integrity.

With the intent of I wish I'd remember the spiritual basis of a young confession: the Baha'i. This "spiritual movement" was born by the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, who left us a spiritual and social legacy which can be useful for our times.

The basic message of this movement is composed by three peculiar elements: the concord, the important unity of human being's family and the extraordinary conception that religion is eventually a unique reality which is expressed in many forms of

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religion as we know them nowadays.

The idea can be summed up like that: "The earth is just a country, and the citizens are all human beings".

Peaceful coexistence will be obtained if everyone recognizes the equality of dignity and the rights of all his fellow men.

The acknowledgement of human rights is the goal that every religious community should pursue and teach its followers.

We are used to regard different cultures and religions as in conflict, but this is as often not true.

Civil wars where victims and torturers belonged to different religious creeds were common in the past, but even today, religion divides people.

Nowadays, in a industrialized and globalized world, this exploitation of religious differences reveals itself in new and different ways from the past.

"Holy wars" still exist, and religious persecutions are carried out for propaganda purposes or even for economical reasons.

As a member of the Human Rights Commission of the Italian Senate, I recently found out, to my great dismay, the existence of mass incarceration of practitioners of the Falun Gong spiritual discipline, perpetrated by the Republic of China since 1999. Persecution and barbaric practices such as organ harvesting have been confirmed by official reports.

Once again, with the discriminant of religious ideology the Chinese Government commits a grave violation of human rights towards citizens guilty

only of practicing a discipline not aligned to the government's official rule.

For China, they are a minority who can be silently sacrificed in order to support the business of medical tourism.

For these reasons I have proposed and supported a resolution that will require Italy to strongly disapprove such practices. Religion must help unite people and not to be a justification for oppression.

In an era that has unexpectedly opened opportunities for dialogue between different and distant points of view, it is worth starting fresh from the topic of a new citizenship.

Our aim should be a society working hard for the inclusion of all individuals, regardless of race, political, social or religious views.

A society that shuns xenophobia and built on mutual and genuine curiosity for different cultures.

My wish is for religious leaders of the world to be aware of the current need to work for achieving respect for human rights in the world, and the important role they play in this process.

It would be desirable to have a meeting place where all religious leaders of the world can come together to find common goals on which to converge teachings and examples given on a daily basis to their communities.

To remind each individual that before judging our neighbor as poor, sick, stranger, he or she should look how we all suffer and we all feel, and therefore how we are all, before anything else, humans beings●

Biography

Sen. Ivana Simeoni Member of the Italian Senate

Ivana Simeoni (born in Roccantica, Italy, in December 28 1950) is an Italian politician. In 2013 she was elected senator of the seventeenth Legislature of the Italian Republic in the region of Lazio for the 5 Star Movement.

She is a current member of the "12th Permanent Committee Hygiene and Health" and the "Extraordinary Commission for the protection and promotion of human rights".

"The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"

Intellectual Culture and Peace-Building: Perspectives From the Sokoto Caliphate ROME; APRIL 1st, 2014

A lecture by H.E Alhajimhammad Sa'Ad Abubakar Sultan of Sokoto and President General, Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic affairs

Rome; April 1st, 2014



I wish to express my profound gratitude to the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy [ICD] for extending its kind invitation to me to attend this august gathering. I am highly delighted to be here and to join this distinguished array of participants, including religious leaders and scholars, diplomats and elder statesmen, as well as intellectuals, government officials and community leaders from different climes and regions.

I would also like to state that the theme of this International Symposium which is "the promotion of world peace through Inter-faith dialogue," is not only appropriate but timely. Many parts of the world, as we are all quite aware, are passing through difficult and trying times. The sanctity, respect and protection of human life and dignity are slowly but systematically giving way to civil strife and wanton destruction of life and property. Religious toleration and cultural understanding which had, hitherto, provided the sturdy bases of our collective existence, are vigorously being challenged and undermined by the combined forces of bigotry, hate and intolerance. We can only allow these forces to succeed at our own peril. The promotion of peace and reconciliation, therefore, becomes not only a

collective duty but a personal obligation. It is a clear testimony of the Qur'an [4:114] that

"There is no good in most of their secret talks save in him who orders charity or righteous deeds or conciliation between mankind."

Our distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, I must state that the West African sub-region I come from has also not been spared these trials and difficulties. When I became the Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs [NSCIA] in 2006, we found on the ground a fertile ethno-religious crisis which wreaked havoc on the entire nation. Neighbor turned against neighbor, community against community and as the crisis persisted, thousands came to lose their lives, their livelihood and their places of worship. In the last few years, we have also been saddled with a virulent insurgency which had claimed in horrific circumstances, tens of thousands of lives and the displacement of over 2 million persons. But with everything said and done, the principal question still remained: What was the real religious content of these sectarian conflicts? What were the ethnic, communal and political dimensions of these conflicts to which Religion stood proxy? And indeed how could any true believer stand before God and profess that O! God, I killed my neighbor because his co-religionists killed our people elsewhere? Or much worse, how could one face the Almighty and tell Him that Oh Lord, we had to massacre two hundred young souls from your creatures because they were going to the wrong school, please reward us for our good deeds. These and similar questions could not but challenge the conscience of any religious leader to rededicate oneself to peace-building and reconciliation and to promote dialogue within and across the religious divide, with a view to bringing succor and relief to our sorely tested communities.


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The Honorable Chair, our distinguished participants, I must also admit that as the Sultan of Sokoto, one of the principal sources of motivation I had, in my peace-building endeavors, was the Islamic intellectual legacy of the Sokoto Caliphate which has become an integral part of the culture and tradition of our society. The founders of the Caliphate, Shaykh Uthman Ibn Fodio, Shaykh Muhammad Bello and Shaykh Abdullah Ibn Fodio, were veritable scholars who labored assiduously, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to establish a socio-economic and political system that reflected their Islamic beliefs. They justified every action they took and authored over 300 titles on state matters as well as on Islamic Jurisprudence, Qur'anic Exegesis, Astronomy and Medicine. This intellectual heritage has been able to engender a broad and value-driven approach to institution building and social development. They are also values which, in contemporary times and in times of enormous challenges, could guide us in building stable, peaceful and prosperous societies. It is for this reason that I wish to speak to you on Intellectual Culture and Peace-Building.

One of the key aspects of the intellectual culture of the Sokoto Caliphate which I wish to share with you is the strategic emphasis on knowledge and learning. Within the general context of the encouragement of learning in Islam, Shaykh Uthman Ibn Fodio, opines that

“A man without learning is like a country without inhabitants. The finest [qualities] in a leader, in particular, and in people in general, are the love of learning, the desire to listen to it and holding the bearer of knowledge in great respect. On the other hand, if the leader is devoid of learning, he follows his whims and leads his subjects astray, like a riding beast with no halter, wandering off the path and perhaps spoiling what it passes over.”

According to Shaykh Uthman, knowledge is an essential quality of good leadership. For, in his words, “A leader has set up himself to deal with people’s natures, to settle their disputes and to undertake their government. These require outstanding learning, keen insight and extensive study. How would he get on if he had not made the necessary preparations and made himself ready for these matters? Other people do not lack those who oppose them, point out their shortcomings and hold contrary views. That helps a man to train himself

and learn where the right way lies. A leader, on the other hand, does not encounter any of these things because his high position cuts him off from them, since the only people who associate with him are those who glorify his status, conceal his drawbacks and praise him for what he does not possess. Their only reply to him is, ‘The leader is right.’

The emphasis on knowledge and learning within the Sokoto cultural traditions has had the effect of broadening the intellectual horizons of Sokoto scholars and instilling the spirit of research and enquiry thereby making cultural exchange, interaction and dialogue feasible and profitable. A case in point was the visit of Hugh Clapperton in the 1820s to Sokoto where he met Sultan Muhammad Bello. Clapperton brought different gift items of British Manufacture to the Sultan but what really caught his fancy were the books that his guest brought including the Euclid, a Greek Mathematical treatise; the works of the 11th Century Philosopher and Medical writer, Ibn Sina; as well as an Arabic translation of the Bible. Sultan Bello lamented that he had some of these books in his library but lost them in a fire incident. He was deeply engrossed in reading some portions of the Bible when his guest took his leave, just as Clapperton found him busy with the Euclid when he paid him a second visit.

The second aspect of Sokoto Caliphate’s intellectual culture which I wish to draw your attention to is the imperative of Justice. The Caliphate leaders view Justice both as a person quality as well as the sure basis for building a purposeful and stable polity. And in all cases the welfare of the people remains paramount. In the words of Shaykh Uthman Ibn Fodio,

“Seeing to the welfare of people is more effective than the use of force. It has been said that the crown of a leader is his integrity, his stronghold is his impartiality and his wealth is [the welfare of] his people. There can be no triumph with transgression, no rule without learning and no leadership with vengeance.”

In another place, Shaykh Uthman Ibn Fodio also observed:

“One of the swiftest ways of destroying a state is to give preference to one particular tribe over another, or to show favor to one group of people rather than another, and draw near those who should be kept

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away and keep away those who should be drawn near... .. A state can endure with unbelief but it cannot endure with injustice.”

The third aspect of the Sokoto intellectual culture which I wish to highlight is the protection of rights, especially of disadvantaged groups, including women. Lamenting on the condition of women in 19th century Hausaland, Shaykh Uthman pointed out that

“One of the greatest calamities which have afflicted Hausaland is the practice of many of its scholars in abandoning their wives, daughters and servants in state of ignorance. They are left like animals without any effort to teach them what Allah has made obligatory on them regarding the tenets of the faith and regulations governing Ablution, Prayers, Fasting and other acts of worship as well as what was required of them in their business transactions. This is a grave mistake and a prohibited innovation. They treat them like utensils which they put to use but when broken, get thrown into the dustbin. What a strange behavior! How could they leave their wives, daughters and servants in the darkness of ignorance and astray while educating their students morning and evening? This is just for their selfish interest and for show and ostentation.”

“Oh, Muslim women do not heed the calls of those misguided folk who deceived you into obeying your husbands without ordaining you to obey Allah and His Messenger. They kept on saying that the salvation of the woman lies obeying her husband, merely to attain their aims with you and to satisfy their lust. They never enjoin you to do what Allah and His Messenger ordained unto you to do...”

“And they over-burden you with what Allah and His Messenger never ordained you to do at all, such as cooking, washing of cloths and similar chores, principally for their personal comfort without asking you to do what Allah and His Messenger ordained you to do, which is obeying Allah and His Messenger.”

On the compulsory service of the husband to his wife again Shaykh Uthman is emphatic:

“The basis for the compulsory service of the husband to his wife was clearly stated in Surat Taha [20: 117] where Allah admonished Adam when he

[and his wife] were in paradise.”

“You will suffer on account of the ploughing, sowing, cultivating, grinding, baking and other things [you are required to undertake]. So whoever allows his wife to go for ploughing and farming has acted contrary to the provision of this verse... ..”

“Shaykh Khalil enunciated in the Mukhtasar that “it is obligatory, on the husband to make provision for water, oil, wood, salt and meat as may be required from time to time as well as bed and beddings. He should, if he is rich, provide one or more persons as may be appropriate to serve his family or pay for the services [of his wife]. But if he is poor, she can prepare for the husband alone what he can eat or drink without his guests except where she was compensated for her services or had volunteered on her own accord, seeking Allah’s reward.

Honorable chair, our distinguished participants, may I venture to ask: How do we transform Inter-faith Dialogue from its current symbolic status to an Agenda for Action that would engender harmonious relations between different religious groups within our communities and promote the emergence of a common citizenship? This is a question we should all strive to answer based on our specific circumstances. May I, however, offer few advices based on our experiences in Nigeria. Firstly, we must build the requisite leadership that has the courage and the foresight to initiate and sustain meaningful and productive inter-faith dialogue. Our experience in Nigeria has been that we engage in Inter-faith Dialogue only after a crisis. This dialogue is usually externally induced, with the specific goal of calming tempers and trading blame. We must go beyond this symbolic level and engage in Inter-faith dialogue as a strategic undertaking which shall contribute to peace-building. This process should necessarily involve building confidence and sincerity among faith leaders and embrace the followership in a deliberate and systematic manner to ensure efficacy and sustainability.

Secondly, we must all be guided by common values and work together to actualize these values in the wider society. We must all respect the sanctity of life and we should find no excuse for anyone who sheds blood regardless of his religious affiliation. We must champion the cause of justice and good governance and organize to oppose whosoever perpetrates injustice, Muslim or Christian. We must

fight corruption and ensure that we collectively organize to oppose corruption within and outside our governance system. Above all, we must never allow ourselves to be manipulated by politicians who wish to use us to peddle hate and bigotry to attain their vested interests. Most of our ethno-religious crises, especially in Nigeria, are perpetuated by our inability to master sufficient courage to say No. Your Excellency. Count me out. It is essential that we come together to face the challenges of building a just and equitable society.

Thirdly, we must work together to fight poverty and disease within our communities. This will not only bring inter-faith action close to the grassroots but will affirm our common humanity and being our brothers' keepers. The current effort in Nigeria in establishing and sustaining the Nigerian

Biography

H.E Alhajimhammad Sa'Ad Abubakar
Sultan of Sokoto and President General, Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs

Amirul Mumineen Sultan Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III (born August 24, 1956 in Sokoto, Nigeria) is the 20th Sultan of Sokoto, the titular ruler of Sokoto in northern Nigeria, head of Jama'atu Nasril Islam (Society for the Support of Islam - JNII), and president-general of the Nigerian National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA). As Sultan of Sokoto, he is considered the spiritual leader of Nigeria's 70 million Muslims, roughly 50 percent of the nation's population. On November 2nd, 2006, Sultan Sa'adu Abubakar succeeded his brother, Muhammadu Maccido.

Sultan Sa'adu Abubakar is the younger son of the 17th Sultan, Siddiq Abu Bakar dan Usuman, who held the Sultanate for over fifty years. Sultan Abubakar began his military career in 1975 and was commissioned a second lieutenant two years later. After that, he served in the elite Armored Corps. He did military training overseas, including in India and Canada. He headed a presidential security unit of the Armored Corps that guarded then military ruler General Ibrahim Babangida in the late 1980s. Sultan Abubakar also commanded a battalion of African peacekeepers in Chad during the early 1980s as part of the Organization of African Unity's force and was military liaison officer for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the mid 1990s. In addition to that, he served with West Africa's peacekeeping force in Sierra Leone and was Nigeria's military attaché to Pakistan when he was recalled to take office as the 20th Sultan of Sokoto.

Interfaith Action Association [NIFAA] is a welcome development and it is our ardent hope and fervent prayer that we should all work together to expand its scope and deepen its activities.

Finally, we must all strive to restrain the extremists amongst us through all the legitimate channels at our disposal. We must above all never allow them to dictate the tone and content of our relationship. We must all endeavor to build an honest and balanced relationship as dictated by the mainstream tenets of our Abrahamic Faiths. We must struggle together to build a just and tolerant society where we shall all enjoy the dividends of our common citizenship.

Wassalamu alaikum wa rahmotulahi ta'ala wa barakatuhu.

"European culture in globalized world"

A Lecture by MP Vášáryová Magdaléna, Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic

Rome; April 1st, 2014



A turtle goes its way on the earth and has no dreams of being able to fly, wrote Umberto Eco some time ago.

It is only us, people, who think that we can live forever, being geniuses all of us and no longer acknowledging "the impossibilities". We do not regard our desires as unrestrained, our luxury as untenable or our dreams as unnecessary passions. Our society is a society of people who wants anything immediately. Humility and the aim of suffering have disappeared from our vocabulary. Peace has become a ridiculous word and we are afraid to utter the word "war", even as a member NATO. We are living our weekends, holidays and wonderful opportunities for spending leisure time. We wake up and fall asleep with the slogan: We can, because we want! All manuals are advising us on How to Achieve Success. All limits, all borders, have ceased to exist; we have abolished them.

My great teacher, sociologist Pitirim Sorokin, wrote in a dialogue with his friend at Charles University in Prague, Emanuel Chalupný, that every great culture, rather than being only a deposit of various cultural phenomena ... constitutes an individual unit and its various parts are connected under one basic principle, and so create the same value. And so if one of its substantive part changes, the entire culture changes. Did we change it?

Polish philosopher L.Kolakowski continues in the reflections on European culture in 1980. There is no society that would be without the devil, without evil, without sin, without conflicts, just some Europeans fell ridiculous idea of superiority of European culture and possibilities to create a paradise forever. It was the fruit of their pride. But, we do not have a choice only between total perfection or total self-destruction of our culture. Our destiny is a constant worry and fear that will never end. It is the eternal never-ending. This spirit of uncertainty, the powerlessness of achieving harmony as nirvana, it all gives European culture the right to be called universal.

Today, we are asking this intransigent question again: what is our fundamental value, the value of our European culture? The financial crisis has shaken our conviction that we live in security, surrounded by almighty experts who are infinitely enlarging our wealth. We have also regarded the fight between democracy and totalitarianism, between freedom and despotism, as a matter of the past, quietly resting in a back corner of European cemeteries. Until Russia's attack at Ukraine's sovereignty, safeguarded by an international treaty signed in Budapest by one of the occupants, has waked us up from this dolce far niente. Biological analogies predicting an exhaustion and weariness of democracy as a system, democracy which is dying and of which we – behind the Iron Curtain – used to dream fruitlessly and with concerns, are completely useless, and I am convinced of that. Many ambitious and egoistic people make their career by prophesying, the extinction of our civilisation, worthy of an ancient Sibyl. They are spitting out tonnes of moralistic waste only to add at least a little weight to their terrestrial existence and to bask in the limelight of the media for at least a while.

But what is our fundamental value? The fundamental value for us, Europeans of the 21st century? Without moralising and without modern

culture of scaring us through the media. A value worth of our protection and our defence. Those two words that we have already forgotten in our open world without any borders. Shall our value be entertainment, i.e. the proverbial Carpe diem, or various entertaining pathologies? Oh, Lesbia, you are beautiful... now only elicits a smile of the past, as the smile of Gioconda. One thing is for sure – the hedonistic period of the end of the century, for which we, Slovaks had been waiting and for which had been looking forward so impatiently in all Central Europe, is over for good. Not for the wrath of Gods for our faithlessness, nor for us forgetting about Memento, homo... for a while. The world has simply changed, as so many times in the past. And European culture is facing its EITHER-OR.

Our culture is humanistic stricto sensu. Our value is man, a unique being, real man not man existing as wired. Man as we have become accustomed to, with two faces: one, the divine face, created in God's image, and the other the face of Janus. It is us who are the value, us with the face of a genius on the one hand, and disillusioned on the other hand. We, vulnerable, scared of seeing our reflection in the mirror, alienated and confronted by different versions of reality and virtuality. We do not know which is genuine and which is false, and in the same time recklessly creating our different identities in networks.

We are partly lost between fact and fable. And so up to now, we have been "wallowing" in the feeling of exclusivity, loneliness and injustice committed on us by the others. The others amongst us. And we have lost the habit of rural hatreds, we have declared it as a non-European.

Slovakia is Europe, with common European problems, but at the same time we are dealing with problems that are already behind you and at the same time ours in common.

The current political populism divides our society into two groups of people in the jargon: an honest rural man and the corrupt unworthy elites. Therefore division against which Emanuel Kant fundamentally spoke of his belief in urgent equality of human beings as wise and single subjects.

Exactly as in your country, we see in Slovakia efforts to weaken representative democracy, in the name of this division, which still has only shallow roots in

Slovakia. The blame for these increasingly popular notions is being put on the commercialised media, ideologically vague policies of traditional political parties, and the citizens' wish to break the taboos that society was scared by in the past.

Our past includes a long period of a lack of sovereignty and totalitarian regimes that lasted much too long (and provided you with a relatively long peaceful period without any major problems), and so we have learned to regard politics incorrectly, as the fight between the good and the evil. As in our fairy tales. We hated the Hapsburgs, who re-catholicised us amidst bloodshed, Hungarians, who wanted to de-nationalise us, and most of us silently supported the fascists, who let us rob Jewish property. Initially, we supported the communists, who let us receive money for non-working performance, and later we hated them because they separated us from the luxury of the western world. Anti-Americanism, which was massively infused into us by communist journalists for two generations, is deeply rooted in us and in today's Slovakia we can see the gradual emergence of hatred and contempt of the EU as a force too weak to straighten things out. And throughout this time we are looking for an excuse for all of this, so that we are not held responsible for ourselves and for what we have produced in our country.

So that we can pretend to be the victim. The lovely victim of you, the western countries –all the time - fate of others. And after a decade being European presence, we slowly but surely starting to have a right to hate.

Human conflicts had always pyrophoric and the self-catalytic mechanism inside, which turned mere dissatisfaction into deadly enmity. Spirit of understanding, understanding others without dirty tricks and conformism, the ability to overcome hostility in ourselves and in others without moving beyond the borders of what we consider our values, is an art, European culture. Culture that we have developed and which is not a natural behavior of human beings. And also our ability, even today, constantly train ourselves in this art, persist in our culture, on which is fate of the democratic system in the world dependent on. Huntington has not comforted us with his claim that the disappointment with democracy failing to resolve all of our problems is inevitable and will pass.

European Ukraine is having hard times today. And Europeans are making exams. What is true and what we really believe? What we have buried under our swimming pools and what of our values we hold true, remains only as a formal claim? I am not going to talk about weakened Ukrainian currency, about their debts, about blood and sweat that is waiting for Ukrainian citizens. We shall talk about the system that Russian federation exported to us together with oil, gas and millions dollars stored in European banks.

A pathologically system under the standard under the slogan –, everything is allowed, you just have to know how to do it! After the financial crisis we are facing the crisis of trust in contracts. If Budapest international treaty guaranteeing the independence of Ukraine is not valid any longer which treaty actually is valid? The opaque building of international law, the security we believe in, collapsed like a house of cards. A Moscow glimpse on these ruins is seen so funny. It is similarly funny for as if bad children pull down your lego tower you have built for more than a half of day.

If international treaties, signed under the flags and symbols of sovereignty of law are not valid, are our constitutions actually in power? Are we going to replace them with results of manipulated referendums instead of parliamentary democracy? Are we going to behave as a voters similarly as

intoxicated with slactivism by clicking "like" on Facebook? Are we going to make happy street speakers who have popular slogans – "I am following people's will"? Or can we hope that worshiper's of direct democracy learnt a lesson from Crimea referendum live?

The European contracts always require two persons – says the adage. Even after efforts of pushing button reset by USA and pathetic hugs by Europeans', there is still old Stalinist KGB who is not gentlemen. Do we understand it already? Europeans having sweet illusions about convenient path of stepped and wise changes in Europe, which we shall altogether consider today as lovely naïve.

And naivety of adults – lets say it straight away – is stupid! Incurable folly! But as always, in European history we have a chance. There are always a few Europeans whose shoulders we can all stand on. Our culture stood on them in the past and also today we do not need to search for old naïve recipes on purifying fire at medieval alchemists. We are starting again a difficult, uncertain journey of searching for indicative signs that will lead us on the hard but well-known path we all know from our fairy tales. European path that is about to prepare us to fight for our values and culture without rural hatred.

Dear Friends, the world has changed - and nothing will ever as it was before ●

Biography

MP Vášáryová Magdaléna

Sultan of Sokoto and President General, Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic affairs

Vášáryová Magdaléna is a Slovak actress and diplomat, prominent for her liberal anti-nationalist stances. In 1971 she completed her studies at Comenius University in Bratislava. Until 1989 she acted in several Slovak theatres, including Slovak National Theatre and in numerous movies. She was ambassador of Czechoslovakia in Austria (1990–1993) and ambassador of Slovakia in Poland (2000–2005).

She was one of the candidates in the 1999 presidential election, but did not advance to the second round of the election. From February 2005 to July 2006 she held the position of State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia. In the 2006 parliamentary elections, she was elected to the National Council of the Slovak Republic for Slovak Democratic and Christian Union - Democratic Party.

"Peace and Dialogue among Civilizations"

A Lecture by President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Former President of Spain

Rome; April 1st, 2014



Firstly, I want to thank the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy for their invitation to participate in this Symposium. My gratitude is for all its members and especially to Minister Frattini with whom I shared governmental tasks. Believe me, it is a pleasure to be in Rome; in this unique city, and furthermore it is of great interest to me to be in the Senate, which is actually in a very transcendent moment. In Spain we also have a Senate, which we have been reforming for already 25 years.

Dear friends, a look to the past, to the not far away past, does not induce us to feel proud of ourselves. In the XXth Century, millions of people died as victims of the wars: here in Europe, in the Balkans, in Korea, in Vietnam, in the Middle East, and also in my own country. How many dead people died as a result of war in the world of the XXth Century? 70, 80, 90 million? And then the cold menace of the Cold War and the nuclear apprehensiveness. And now, the Middle East's conflicts, and terrorist violence. Terrorism has generated and is generating pain and suffering because it is an unfair violence, useless as well. Against that we have to reaffirm strong principles which have to involve every civilization and culture; because violence can never defend a religion or an ideology, since violence is

only violence.

Killing is not defending an idea, it is merely killing. The use of the force can only be legitimated when it is done by a State; and always as a last resort, and like a defense as according to the United Nations Charter. But we have to have a more positive perspective for this XXIst Century which is just starting. Nothing makes us think in a world of confrontation. There are no big polarized divisions today in the world. Conflicts tend to be at regional or local levels: Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and mostly Palestine. The Israel-Palestine conflict is a permanent risk for the Middle East and a factory for radicalism, and this is the big subject to resolve in order to have peace in the world.

In that conflict are all the factors that use to provoke confrontations between different cultures, religions and identities. But globally - and Crimea's crisis will not change the tendency - we can think that we are decreasing the amount of wars, innocent victims, terrorist and guerrilla groups. Terrorist groups do not exist in Europe any longer, after the annulment of violence from ETA in Spain; there is a progressive decline in Latin America, and the decrease of violence in Sri Lanka, Asia, and there is Turkish progress with the PKK for peace in that region as well.

Nevertheless, there stays a menace of radical Islamic terrorism. We can ask ourselves what is the cause, because terrorism, conflicts and wars are ever decreasing. A very clear point: democracies do not have wars between them. There is not any example about two democratic countries who had a conflict. We know that very well in Europe. And we know that with consolidated democracies, conflicts happen very randomly. And how is the world developing? In the last 30 years we have seen how we have advanced from 50 to 100 countries

with democracies, more or less institutionalized. In recognition of pluralism, freedoms and legitimation are the values and the conditions for peace. Wars and violence are the consequence of negating pluralism; the imposition of values and ideas, the idea of thinking people as 'lower' who do not think as we do, or do not share our faith, or our flag.

And nevertheless, there is no culture or civilization which is not the result of the influence of another culture and civilization. This is how it has always been and always will be. There are just a few places in the world so conducive to provoke this reflection as much as Rome; cradle of civilizations, civilization of civilizations, and cradle of the European civilization, even if sometimes, and more in the current times. There is a tendency to forget that Europe was born in the South. If we have a look at all the landscapes of the world from East to West and North to South, from Oslo's street to Tangier's ones, from Prague's, Saint Petersburg's, Jerusalem's, Riyadh's, Lima's, Beijing's or New York's, what highlights is the plurality and the diversity of human beings.

This plurality is still on the ideas we had inherited, in the faith we had embraced, and in the flags that thrill us as well. But the different ideas, cultures, civilizations and religions should not be used to class men but to understand ourselves better and to understand each other better. Our different identities had justified wars and violence - and also the religious identities. We had religious wars, and we know that killing has been done in the name of a faith, and nevertheless all the religions contain a message of peace. That message has strength when it goes together with the ideas of freedom and pluralism. The same as modern society's plurality should protect religious freedom as a fundamental freedom. Religions should assume the plurality of the faith as a natural process, not as a deviation. More than heretics what we have here are people with different creeds. As Roger Williams said, almost one of North America's Founding Fathers, God is too big to leave him under a single ceiling.

Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and other have all have made decisive contributions to progress; to civilizing culture, to solidarity and

to the noble cause of remembering the forgotten. However, we have also in name of these religions committed big mistakes. The religions are big believers that they progressed civilizations, sustaining and identifying them. Catholicism in the West, Islam in the East, Buddhism in the Far East. When religions contribute to peace it is when there is dialogue and they open themselves to each other. When they resign to dogmatism is it the opposite. Dialogue has become a way to reach the goal of peace itself. Dialogue between religions is the main condition for peace, because it presumes the idea of pluralism. Dialogue is to look for and to be open to knowledge, to find ideas, history, creativity and spirituality. Dialogue is not to win or to loose, but to recognize that there is no culture, religion or nationality superior to others.

Fortunately we can see that there are several initiatives for dialogue among religions and civilizations; the Foundation for Asia-Europe, the Asia-Pacific Centre for Inter-Religious Dialogue, Vienna's Centre for Dialogue, etc. But there is one place in the United Nations; the institution where all countries are included. The Alliance of Civilizations, which has 136 countries and 20 international organizations as members, and that has celebrated 5 forums and has a High Representative, from Qatar, who works with projects and programs in four specific areas: education, youth, communication and media, and migration. It has three regional strategies: Mediterranean, Southeast Europe, and Latin America; and work for doing them in Asia, Pacific and Africa. Its objectives are to spread the ideas of reconciliation, peace and respect, religious freedom, and pluralism. I was a promoter with Turkey at the Alliance of Civilizations, and that is why I was to give you my belief that these initiatives, like the one from today, are helping to promote peace and pacified coexistence.

The idea is for peace culture to not be forgotten because of other world worries like the economy or climate change. At this moment, if we want to see the decisive point where respect between different civilizations and religions is at stake we have to look to the Arab Spring. And I would like to highlight the

constitutional process in Tunisia as of big historical importance because of its religion and politics that are trying to understand each other. To know how to give each one its own place is maybe one of the most interesting processes of recent times. I think that the world community should support this process in a special way of what is happening in Tunisia. But not forgetting that Palestine and its aspiration for peace is still the thermometer to know if the future of understanding between cultures and civilizations is going to keep moving forward.

And let me highlight a phenomenon where our capacity of dialogue and understanding is implicit: the migratory movements. We cannot betray our compromise about Human rights when we talk about migration. This is the true test for the pluralist convictions of the advanced civilizations: migration. And I know that the religions have a strong voice around the rights of immigrants. It has been recently done by Pope Francis, and it should be a message coming from all religions. Immigrants tend to be from other cultures and civilizations and the presence of Human Rights is judged more about

how we behave to others than to ourselves.

I am about to finish. The tenacity and the firmness in the defense of values is the most powerful tool that we have for peace and respectful coexistence. And the first value is the word, the direct word – clear and comprehensive. Words are the beginning and the end of everything. Not words like a nice rhetorical exercises, but words that says how we really are. What we say should look like us. And we have to say that peace is not a promise or neither a vain desire - it is a will. It is an expression of coherence and a weapon against the hegemony of superiority. Peace is always to be ready to understand other people, other cultures, other religions and other versions of history. And nothing deserves more than a policy for peace. Peace as tolerance, as respect to the diverse; this is what remains at the end of history - the rest is ephemeral. Let dialogue for peace maintain peace; to strengthen consequent behaviours and facts. Peace is the big duty of religions, cultures, civilizations, countries, and all human beings. Thank you very much ●

Biography

President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero Former President of Spain

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (born August 4, 1960) is a member of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE). He was elected for two terms as President of the Government of Spain, in the 2004 and 2008 general elections. On the 2nd April, 2011 he announced he would not stand for re-election in the 2011 general election. He left office on the 21st of December, 2011.

President Zapatero studied Law at the University of León (Spain), graduating in 1982. After that he worked as a teaching assistant in Constitutional Law at the University of León until 1986 (he continued working on a voluntary basis until 1991). He eventually joined the PSOE on the 23rd of February, 1979.

In 1982, President Zapatero became head of the Socialist Youth Organization in the province of León (Spain). In 1986, he was elected to represent the province of León in the Cortes (Parliament), becoming its youngest member after the election held on the 20th of June. In 1988, he became Secretary General in León after a complex internal fight for power that ended a long period of division. In 1996, after the General Election, President Zapatero kept his seat at the Congress of Deputies. The following year, President Zapatero was again elected Secretary General of León and after the national conference held by the party that year he entered the National Executive (the party's governing body).

President Zapatero decided to run for the leadership of the Socialist Party in its 35th Conference to be held in June 1996. Together with other socialist members, he founded a new faction within the party called Nueva Vía (New Way) in April 2000. On the 25th of June, 2000 President Zapatero officially announced his intention to run for the federal Secretary General at a Conference of the Socialist Party of León. President Zapatero resulted successfully and was officially elected. He was appointed as Secretary General of the PSOE and the opposition leader in 2000 until he became Prime Minister of Spain on the 14th of March, 2004.

Among the main actions taken by the Zapatero administration were the withdrawal of Spanish troops from the Iraq war, which allegedly resulted in long-term diplomatic tensions with the George W. Bush administration; the increase of Spanish troops in Afghanistan; the idea of an Alliance of Civilizations, the legalization of same-sex marriage; reform of abortion law; an attempt at peace negotiation with ETA; the increase of tobacco restrictions; and the reform of various autonomous statutes, particularly the Statute of Catalonia.

"The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"

A Lecture by H. E. Amb. August Parengkuan, Ambassador of Indonesia to Italy.

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



Thank you, good morning everybody. I really appreciate this Institute for having this seminar, a very good one, and I'm happy I can attend this. Also, I am happy it happens in Italy, because to me Italy is an example of a really tolerant country for different religions. As you know, one of the biggest mosque in Europe is in Italy, and Rome used to be the center of the catholic religion, so I think this is the most tolerant country in Europe and probably in the world.

Thank you very much. It is indeed an honour and a pressure for me to be here today, to be a member and a speaker for the promotion of world's peace through inter faith dialogue and unity of faiths. In this forum I would like to share Indonesia's experiences in the promotion of peace in the national, regional and even international level through interfaith dialogue.

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelagic country, consisting of 17.125 islands, with 240 millions people and 1.128 ethnic groups. It is never an easy task to govern this diverse, large area and highly populated country. Since it's indipendence, the nation has to deal with enourmous and diverse challenges that

threaten the nation's success, like separatist treats, ethnic and religious conflict, violence, prejudice, misunderstanding and intolerances.

Let me now share our experiences in promoting peace within our community and resolving our internal conflicts through interfaith dialogue. As a multiethinc and multireligious nation, managing diversity is critical for us, being the third biggest democratic country in the world, but our custom is to promote the practice of dialogue and consultation. We believe that only through dialogue human kind can learn to live together peacefully and harmoniously. It is also only through dialogue that we can recognize our share and common values of humanity. Many studies have demonstrated the power of interfaith dialogue to address our unstable world, marked by deficiance, ethnic and religious conflicts, disparitites, communal violence, prejudice, misunderstanding and intolerance. This is the reason why Indonesia always encourage interfaith dialogue with various partners at the bilateral, regional and international level. This is always and will always be an important aspect of our foreign policy.

Numerous interfaith conferences have been held in Indonesia including conferences among islamic scholars, religious leaders and interfaith leaders. Through this kind of dialogue we are able to address intolerance and prejudice as well as ongoing problems such as religious conflicts and ethnic tension. Since 2004, Indonesia has developed a form of interfaith dialogue with proactive efforts in promoting tolerance and mutual understanding between the members of different religious communities and among civilizations. This activity is considered an important initiative to promote harmony and cooperation and eliminate suspicions with understandings between religions and cultures.

Indonesia has held a number of activities in interfaith dialogue within the framework of bilateral agreements with other countries such as Austria, Russia, Britain, Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Australia, Ethiopia, USA and especially with Italy. Indonesia has also carried out interfaith dialogue in the regional framework through the Asia-Pacific interfaith dialogue forum, APEC, Intercultural and Faith Symposium, International Conference of Islamic Studies, ICIS, and the World's Peace Forum (WPF). Meanwhile, within the framework of interregional cooperation, Indonesia also hosted ASEM for interfaith dialogue, ASEM is Asia and Europe meeting, interfaith dialogue forum which was first held in Bali in the year 2005, which produced a declaration that became the foundation for the countries in Asia and Europe to cooperate and eliminate misunderstanding in a dinamic world characterized by the potential conflict between religious and ethnical groups.

Ladies and gentleman, learning from what we have done so far, interfaith dialogue is a continuous process of listening and openeing ourselves to other's thoughts, then delivering the opinion in a constructive way and look for similarities. It is a continuous process to understand other's thoughts, and faith that would give a positive effect towards someone's attitude. This enables people to avoid intolerance and prejudice as well as ongoing problems such as religious conflicts and ethnic tensions. The other most important thing to promote the world's peace is not to only share our ideas in this room, but also sharing the best practices from each country with wider international communities through media and channels.

In line with promoting peace and stability in the region and in the world, Indonesia also actively conduct a yearly program, namely Bali Democracy Forum. It is a forum where asian pacific countries share the commitment to promote the fair use and principles of democracy in the region and beyond. The last Bali Democracy Forum, held on the 6th of November 2013, has shown us how this forum has become a very valuable part of the region's democracy architecture. Our six years in this forum

has been successfully become a platform for Asia-Pacific countries to share view, experiences and best practices of democracy. Through sharing experiences in this forum had proofed strong correlation between democracy and developepment as well as within democracy and peace and stability.

Ladies and gentleman, in our country respect for religious traditions is taught from the very beginning, from the kinder garden, high schools to university. Moreover our Constitution, the Indonesian Constitution, guarantees freedom of religion for its people, promoting a spirit of religious harmony, national unity and maintance of law and order. Indonesia also destinate national holidays for each religious holidays for islam, catholic, protestant, hindu, buddist and confucians. So we have so many public holidays, because we respect all the religious sacred holidays. At least we have five religious holidays, because we respect all the religions in the country.

I would like also to emphasize that democracy and Islam in Indonesia can coexist and also thrive together, in spite of the fact that Indonesia is the world's largest muslim's country. People in Indonesia can live together in harmony regardless their religions. It is very common in Indonesia that members from the same family have differrent religions and faiths, and they live together harmoniously without conflict. As the previous speaker mentioned before, mix marriages can bring peace, and this also happened in Indonesia. Since the government destines national holidays for each religious holidays, Indonesia is a country where most of its people celebrate and enjoy religious holidays of others. Just three days ago we had a public holiday for the hindu new year's calendar. It was a public holiday and because of this the Indonesian embassy also closed last Monday, to respect the hindu's sacred day.

We can not deny that there have been religious conflict and ethnic tension in Indonesia, but we also managed and solved them through discussion and dialogue. Indonesia government realizes that practicing inter faith dialogue creates mutual understanding among its people.

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Ladies and gentlemen, it has been proven through all the history of our nation that we have maintained our balance. That's a large country, Indonesia. From one end to other is it's just like from London to Rome. Our large country is not easy to maintain without understanding and a continuous interfaith dialogue. In our perspective interfaith dialogue should be maintained and strengthened by all stakeholders in order to promote peace and stability in the national,

regional and international level. Indonesia agrees that in order to achieve the world's peace the building of mutual understanding through interfaith dialogue is of a critical importance.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you all so much all for your attention and I wish you all a great and fruitful discussion.

Biography

H. E. Amb. August Parengkuan Ambassador of Indonesia to Italy

Amb. August Parengkuan began his career in 1965 as a Reporter of Kompas for Court news. After having complete his studies of Political Science at the Australian National University, in Canberra, he became Senior Vice President of Kompas Gramedia Group. Besides that, Mr. August Parengkuan also joined the Public Relations Association of Indonesia as Chairman from the period 2000-2002.

He is now appointed as Ambassador to Italy, Malta and Cyprus as well as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Program (WFP), the UN Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS) and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (Unidroit).

"The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"

"The Role of Inter-faith Dialogue in Peace Building"

A Lecture by Sheik Ahmed Tamim (Mufti of Ukraine)

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



Speaking on the need for inter-religious dialogue, it is important to note that Islam as a religion and the Muslim world as a whole have in recent decades been seen as a danger. Widely used are terms such as "Islamic terrorism", "Islamic threat" "Islamists" and other similar expressions. Obviously, the formation towards the Muslims as an „enemy image" can be beneficial to certain political forces, but the benefits are only temporary and illusory and ultimately result in a dead end, as we live in one world and inevitably have problems and some other problems. Furthermore this approach is unacceptable for countries of the former socialist camp, as most of them through the composition of the population are multinational and multi-religious. Therefore, speaking about the development of interfaith dialogue, you should first recognize the need to remove the false myths and stereotypes about Islam and Muslims, to not perceive them as a threat, or as fanatics and terrorists, but as full partners and participants in solving many social problems in peace and the sustainable development of society.

In connection with the things I previously mentioned I consider it necessary to allocate three questions, without which it is impossible to develop effective

interfaith dialogue.

First of all, the fixation must be on the public opinion of our religion, the need for fair and objective attitude towards Islam as a belief, a doctrine of separation of our ideological layers and political speculations introduced by some destructive tendencies and extremist sects who try to use Islam as a cover for their, often criminal, activity.

Secondly, the formation of the balanced state policy in the field of interfaith relations should be based on responsibility of the whole society and not on the desire to achieve short-term political goals and propaganda effects, to develop a comprehensive and consistent position of state and government on the issue of interfaith cooperation -designed for long run.

Thirdly, we must pay special attention to the role of media on Islamic themes and shaping public opinion about Islam.

This division is rather arbitrary, as all these issues are closely linked to one another and it is therefore much more three aspects of the same problem.

Therefore, one of our goals is to teach society to clearly distinguish ideological sectors of the doctrine of Islam and to separate these two concepts. The Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Ukraine has been working for over 20 years. During this time, we are seeing a positive trend, as representatives of other faiths want to learn accurate information about Islam and have become increasingly cooperate with Muslims, based on the common values of all confessional society.

In Ukraine, according to rough estimates, there are about 2 million Muslims. They are representatives of different nationalities, mostly Turkish-speaking, but there are also Arabs, Persians, Caucasians and Slavic Muslims.

Islam became spread in Ukraine during the time of Kievan Rus (from the 9th century). From the 15th century Muslim populations were mostly concentrated in the Southeast region. However, in 1944, the Crimean Tatars, who were one of the many ethnic groups professing Islam, were deported almost completely, resulting in Islam disappearing from the public sphere of religious life in Ukraine, and becoming a matter of personal faith, the basis of domestic customs and rituals. According to the reports of Commissioners of Religious Affairs through the late 20s, 40s and before Ukraine gained its independence in 1991, there was no one registered in the Muslim community. Thus, despite the absence of registered Muslim communities, "continental" Ukraine (without the Crimean peninsula) at the beginning of 1991 had quite a number of Muslims living in Ukraine. In Kiev, there mainly lived Volga Tatars, of Ural and Siberian origin, to a lesser extent the Bashkirs, the representatives of the peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The revival of Islam in Ukraine began in the early 1990s with the acquisition of Ukraine's independence. In September 1992, the first Islamic organization in the history of Ukraine was registered officially on a national scale - the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Ukraine (DUMA). Furthermore, it should be noted that, unlike other organizations, which are built on the basis of ethnic and regional nature DUMA unites Muslims of all nationalities throughout Ukraine.

From the very beginning, our efforts were aimed at rallying the multinational community of Muslims of Ukraine, teaching religious knowledge as well as countering the proliferation of extremist sects in Ukraine. We also tried to establish a constructive relationship with the authorities and representatives of other faiths.

DUMA has been a member of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (VSTSRO) since its formation in 1996 through the initiative of the President of Ukraine as an interfaith representative body under the State Committee of Ukraine for Religious Affairs.

In recent years, Ukraine has had a marked tendency

to involve religious organizations to address various social problems.

Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Ukraine takes an active part in the discussion of issues related to the adoption of laws relating to religious organizations. Thus, representatives of DUMA were included in a working group to draft a new version of the Law of Ukraine "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations." The question arose about the need to identify and compile a list of totalitarian sects and radical extremist organizations religious nature with the introduction of a legal ban on the registration and their activities in Ukraine.

During the discussions at almost all meetings, representatives of religious organizations return again and again to the subject of what is necessary to provide such a rule as stated in the Act, to permit a qualified expert in relation to religious organizations and the wish to legalize it in Ukraine. And it is not only formal positions: statutory documents of the organization (which is actually a model), but also to publish and distribute its literature, as well as the position of its leaders on key issues such as the history of the activities of its adherents in other countries.

When registered religious movements in Ukraine are already rich in their foreign past the it would be nice to know all the details of the registration authority, and also due to the fact that Ukraine, as a sovereign state has the right to independently determine the magnitude of the security threat of its citizens and the measures needed to counter this threat.

As a result, Article 18 of the draft Law was supplemented by a fundamental new position on a comprehensive study of compliance with the legislation of Ukraine in the doctrine or practice of religious organizations that belong to the religious movement, not represented in Ukraine. The Negative Output comprehensive study is the basis for refusal of registration of a religious organization in Ukraine.

At the time it seemed that some members of the working group saw this innovation going against the recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) to some extent.

In this context, some of the experts are concerned that it would not be the result of the introduction of such a provision in the law criticism of Ukraine. But fears were unfounded, and no criticism of this development was unfollowed. Conclusions on the Draft Law of Ukraine "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations", which were given by the Venice Commission on the basis of comments by Georges Malinverni (committee member, Switzerland) and Louis Leon Christian (expert, Belgium) contained no criticism of the proposed complex of Ukraine examination, which confirmed that Europe is sensitive to the measures taken, both in Ukraine and in other countries, and is aimed at enhancing the protection of society from the destructive influence of currents, including the dangers of terrorism.

An important place in the DUMA is taken by the cooperation with the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, as many served in the Ukrainian army and Muslims are in need of the protection of their religious rights in the military service (allocation of time and space to perform the obligatory prayers five times, dietary restrictions, holding Friday prayers). Tool for this collaboration was the Council for Pastoral Care of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, which includes a representative of the Muslims of Ukraine.

DUMA is also actively involved in initiatives to counter the rise of intolerance and discrimination, conflict prevention at the national and religious grounds.

Ukrainian Muslims are actively involved in various roundtables on xenophobia and discrimination, and are part of the working group for the effective exchange of information and strengthening cooperation between law enforcement agencies, the government, religious and community organizations to prevent xenophobia, racism and incitement of ethnic hatred. The decision on the formation of this body was made at a roundtable held at the initiative of the Security Service of Ukraine in May 2013.

All activities of the council, and all of our effort made is to give people the opportunity to form a correct opinion on Islam, to not treat Muslims as extremists, but as a worthy representatives of the people and of the State in which they live.

Thus, due to the recent events that took place in Ukraine in late 2013 - early 2014., You can see how

interfaith dialogue strengthened the cohesion of the Ukrainian society, which has stood in front of the socio-political threats and challenges.

Back in September 2013 as part of DUMA UCCRO, established in support of Ukraine's course towards European integration, it was said that "the future of Ukraine is a natural cause of our historical roots - an independent state in the range of free European peoples."

We as Muslims of Ukraine within its competence, together with the heads of religious denominations have made every possible effort to prevent the division of society on ethnic grounds. As has been said for centuries, multinational Ukraine has for as long as its existence not observed acute conflict over cultural differences. Despite this, there are forces that want to rekindle animosity using this factor. So the example of the recent events was an attempt to provoke a confrontation between East and West Ukraine using not only political views, but also cultural and national differences. In the most critical moments of social confrontation, Muslim religious leaders of other faiths spoke from a position of national reconciliation, the unacceptability of violence, preservation of interethnic and of an interfaith peace in Ukraine. In its communiqué heads of all faiths put forward a number of requirements: calling for an immediate end to the bloodshed on both sides, a request for an urgent meeting with the former President of Ukraine V. Yanukovich and opposition leaders, as well as the requirement to stop the use of religious organizations in political strategies. We also call on all citizens of Ukraine to preserve peace and integrity for the Ukrainian State. Chapter denominations held several meetings with the President and the opposition, where religious leaders have offered their help in resolving the conflict by all available means within the jurisdiction. It was during these hard times for our State that the multifaith Ukrainian society has demonstrated its solidarity in the face of threat.

We are pleased to see the results of their labor across the years of our work and hope the union representatives of different peoples living in Ukraine and hope it was not in vain.

Biography

Sheik Ahmed Tamim
Mufti of Ukraine

Sheikh Ahmed Tamim is Mufti of Ukraine and Chairman of the Religious Board of Muslims of Ukraine, based in Kiev.

In 1976, he graduated from the Department of Computer Science at the Kiev Polytechnic Institute. In 1982, he earned a Master's degree in "Microprocessor Systems and Local Area Networks," and has since worked in several foreign companies.

Previously, he received his Islamic theological education in Syria at the Arab University of Beirut. Moreover, he is the author of several books on Islamic religious themes. In 1994, he was appointed to the First Congress of Muslims of Ukraine as Mufti of Ukraine.

"Welcome Address to the International Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy and Religion"

A Lecture by Alberto Quattrucci, Secretary General of Community of Sant' Egidio

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



Let me say some words about the sort of introductory speech of this important meeting – very syntonic meeting.

Since 46 years the communities of Sant' Egidio in Europe, Asia, especially Latin America and Africa, have been working for dialogue, dialogue amongst faiths and cultures, forcing peace and negotiations in several countries and various continents. But most of all leading a relationship of daily solidarity with the poorest of the world, constantly engaged in a number of battles for the defence of life and human rights, all over in the world.

Thank you very much to all of you to come here and thank you to the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy Studies. [...]

Probably meeting here in this very heart of the community of Sant' Egidio, we are in the very core, I mean heart of the community of Sant' Egidio. I mean this is called the peace home of the community of Sant' Egidio. Because here, were held a lot of negotiations for peace in Portomidia along the years. And I mean through my wide birth, I am not really inside with this community since the beginning, I mean we have the 46th anniversary, celebrated this year of the birth of the community, the start of the community of Sant' Egidio. And then it really is a good privilege and an honour for me to welcome you, to express you our warmest greetings on behalf of our president, who is Marco Impagliazzo, who unfortunately couldn't be here today, for our founder Professor Andrea Riccardi, our founder in the beginning in 1968, when the community started. For everyone in our community, I hope this is not a good opportunity only, but it could be the first step, the first step for good friendship and very intense cooperation among us in the very future.

Thank you so much for coming.

In the love of our community, there is a deep connection between the three dimensions: inter-religious dialogue, commitment to peace and love for the poor. It has been so since the beginning of our experience, born here in Rome in 1968 and then spread to Europe and many countries around the world. The experience of our community makes me convinced that we, we here, men and women or religion, are enjoying at the present a very special historical moment. Today, time of crisis of values and of lack of great legions is the time of religions. They are called lead to a prophetic courage to build a more human world through their alliance with the most vulnerable people in any society. The simplicity and the strength of Pope Francis supports us in this perspective. The religions can give voice to the poorest and reconstruct the world with them. This is the most authentic revolutionary force, which will render a more human world for all.

My dear friends, I firmly believe that religions have a great task today. Through dialogue they can change the hearts and minds of people. And I'm convinced that only by changing hearts and minds we can change the world. Even the most resistant political structures can be changed if we change us and our minds. The opposite is never true,


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transformative structures cannot change the hearts but transformative hearts change the structures. This is the great power of religions.

In 1987 the community of Sant' Egidio started to promote the international meetings of dialogue amongst religions and cultures. The spirit was originated by the day of prayer that his holiness Jean Paul II summoned in Assisi on October 22nd 1986. In that historic event was tied the deep connection between inter-religious dialogue and peace-building. Inter-religious dialogue and peace-building dialogue is the alternative to violence of any kind. Dialogue is a force for peace and peace-making. In the exultation of violence there is always power of a group or individual against the other – the one against the other. And violence has become in many areas of the world a normal habit, a normal habit unfortunately. The one against the other, but the meeting in Assisi on the contrary, united many different men and women in one simple reality, to be side by side in spite of differences, to pray and to ask for peace from the one who has the power to grant it, despite humanities desire for war. That could not become an isolated event. That is why the community of Sant' Egidio urged by several friends belonging to different religious traditions, felt the need to continue that path. That is what Jean Paul II asked for in the evening of 27th October 1986. At the end of that day he said: 'Let us continue to experience the spirit of Assisi, let us continue to spread the message of peace'. We wanted to welcome this appeal from the pope, with its weak strengths supported by a number of friends. It aspired the path followed by Sant' Egidio in the last 27 years. In this spirit we worked together, as in a great pilgrimage of peace. The number of our companions, men and women from more than 70 countries around the world, believers and non-believers, but all people in the search for peace has increased.

Let me stress that the last 30 years of intense and sincere dialogue had generated a deep common wisdom, common wisdom let me say. Let us remember the meeting in Warsaw in 1989 on the 15th anniversary of the official break of the

Second World War. War never again was the title. 'War never again'. After the meeting there was a pilgrimage to Auschwitz- Birkenau. For the first time, representatives of the various religions gathered together in a concentration camp - Jews, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindu. In 1995 the meeting was a special one; it took place in Jerusalem, in the heart of the holy city. The title was 'Together in Jerusalem – Jews, Christians and Muslims'. Then this extraordinary meeting in Bucharest in 1998 'Peace is the name of god - god human kind peoples' was the title. For the first time the community and the orthodox Church of Romania organized together. It paved the way to the first visit of the Pope; Jean Paul II was, to a country with an Orthodox majority – the first visit. 1999, 7 - 9th May, I remember the meeting in Barcelona, the first meeting of the new century 2001. Seven days before the tragedy of the Twin Towers in New York - Seven days before. What does it mean? Our meetings have always been held within history, within history, full of the historical memory of the past and of social commitment in the present. These peace workshops have generated many frights, first the peace In Mozambique, it was signed by Sant' Egidio on October 4th 1992, exactly in this home, you can see the plaque over there on the wall – 4 October 1992. It put the end to a war that had lasted for more than 16 years and that caused a million deaths. Then I want to recall the bloodguilt reconciliation in Algeria. The Roman joined statesman for Guatemala, the agreement for the future of Albania, they do national agreement for Kosovo, and also Cameron, Liberia, Cote Ivor, Togo, Darfur, Guinea and Crete and others.

I went back just three days ago to Manila, Philippines, where I attended an event with some historical significance at Malakye Palace, the palace of the president, on March 27th the signing of the comprehensive agreement of the Bangsamoro – an agreement between the Philippines' government and the MILF, Moro Islamic Liberation Front. An armed opposition group took place took a firm step towards peace and full peace after so many years of conflict in that country. In the case of Mindanao, the conflict that Sant' Egidio followed for many years, the community has had the opportunity to

 "The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"
 

play an active role since 2013 when it was called to be part of the international counter group, with the appointment of a representative in the peace tools between the GPH, the government panel and the MILF, the rebels on the new political entity of Bangsamoro. In this extremely complex case, a conflict of about 40 years, so long time, so many different factions fighting each other, but I want to emphasize that the presence of the inquisition table, in addition to traditional representatives, the presence of two religious bodies as the Islamic, Indonesian, Muhammadiya and the international Christian community of Sant' Egidio was valuable and useful to reach a positive stage of understanding among the two parties.

There are still many problems today, however today we are more and more convinced of one key point, peace is possible, but true peace will be possible if everyone had inter- religious groups, political factions, local administrations, each minority of the whole of Mindanao, if everyone want and if everybody will be allowed to take part in its democratic and synergetic construction. Peace will be authentic if it will be peace for all.

The spirit of Assisi is growing on the Philippines, the dialogue between men and women of religion, becomes a viable option for everyone, even in the case of the Philippines although the path of full peace is still a long way, the path is very clear. There is need to reaffirm a culture of living together, a culture of living together. My thought went back to Sarajevo really, in 2012 you remember, Excellency, when we organized this historical and beautiful meeting all together on the 20th anniversary of the siege of the war. They are all together saying, the future is living together. Sarajevo, let me say the Jerusalem of Europe, let me say it. This is the most precious feud, the besmearing south of this genuine process. In this great task, religions can play a significant role; this is the task of religions today. I feel very much really the importance today of religions in our world. For this reason, the community of Sant' Egidio together with H.E. Cardinal Orlando Quevedo, Bishop of Corcovado, is the first Cardinal nominated by one pope, because Corcovado was not a siege, a siege of

cardinal. The first time that the pope, Pope Francis in this case, nominated one cardinal in Mindanao in Corcovado; it is a very good sign of attention towards this country.

The Cardinal Corcovado together with community of Sant' Egidio and in cooperation with the Muhammadiyah, the Indonesian Muslim Organization, we decided together to promote a conference on inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue for peace. The event will be held in Corcovado on 6th and 7th June 2014 under the title 'Peace is Living Together' for religions and cultures together in dialogue on peace and reconciliation in Mindanao. All of you of course are invited to come, if you can, it would be a pleasure for us.

Today we are together; let me say this last concept. Today we are together, this new monumental peace – this monumental peace, generated by the so called spirit of Assisi. This movement is able to spread a new cultural peace and a cultural peace is a powerful weapon, more powerful than the weapons of violence – more powerful than the weapons of violence. I think that we are in the right time to use and to communicate this cultural peace – our world needs it, our world needs it.

Dear friends, the spirit of Assisi is not a spirit of a club of intellectuals, neither that nor philosophers chattering in their living room, taking tea or something like this. This is not the spirit of Assisi. The spirit of Assisi is the willingness of men and women to defend their lives of everyone, young and elderly, rich and poor, men and women, and to defend their whole life from birth to natural death and to devote one's life to building peace for entire peoples, to society. Peace in every land, this is the spirit of Assisi and can represent a crucial chance, a great opportunity for the future of humanity. It is a new peace movement formed by authentic friends of peace; this is an important expression, friends of peace, as Pope XI spoke about it, in the first message of the world day of peace on January 6th 1968. It was the time of the Vietnam War, the Vietnam War; he wrote Pope XI the proposal to dedicate the world to peace the first day of the New Year. This is not intended; therefore it is crucially

ours, religious, that is catholic. It would hope to have the experience of all the true friends of peace, as if it were their own initiative to be as present in a free manner, congenial to the particular character of those who have a way of our beautiful and our important, is the harmony of our own voices in this world for the attention of this primary good, which is peace - Friends of peace, friends of peace.

We want to reaffirm this peaceful friendship of this year, a hundred years after the First World War this year, the beginning of many wars that have spanned the entire 20th century. We want to set up a time

Biography

Secretary General Alberto Quattrucci
Secretary General of Community of Sant' Egidio

Alberto Quattrucci, born in Rome on December 23, 1952, is living in the same city, Italy. He has studied Pedagogy at the Faculty of Magistero in Rome and Theology at the Gregoriana Pontifical University (specialized in Holy Scripture). In 1976 has been also degreed as "Educator of Special Communities". Furthermore he has deepen his suited together with a concrete and continuous engagement in several social and cultural fields, as History of Religions and Interfaith Dialogue.

Beginning in 1969 he is involved as member of the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome. This experience is rooted in the periphery of Rome thought a serious and continuous effort of solidarity with the poorest and a daily community prayer. The Community of Sant'Egidio is been recognized as a International Public Lay Association of the Catholic Church by the Pontifical Council for Laity since 1986.

Alberto Quattrucci, ordered as Permanent Deacon in 1988 is, since the same year, Secretary General of International Meetings Peoples and Religions, association founded by the Community of Sant'Egidio to promote mutual knowledge and dialogue among Religions.

of peace and justice in Europe and the whole of the world, peace and justice in Europe and throughout the world. Might Europe regain the strength of its commitment to peace, might religions and cultures together join hope in a sincere dialogue build a worth of peace and provide a future for everyone, because we are deeply convinced that only peace is the future.

Thank you very much for your attention ●

"The Role of Inter-Faith Dialogue in Peace Building and Reconciliation"

A Lecture by President Angelo (Anġlu) Farrugia, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



Mr President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to join previous keynote Speakers in thanking the organisers of this International Symposium, namely the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, and particularly its Director General, Mr Mark C. Donfried, for giving me the opportunity to address such an august audience on this important subject which everyone yearns for, namely World Peace. Allow me also to express my gratitude for the hospitality which the organisers have so generously extended to all of us present here today.

Mr President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

While there is sufficient scope to say that Cultural Diplomacy, in its widest of terms, is hard to explain, nonetheless, as Cynthia P. Schneider says in her article entitled 'Cultural Diplomacy: hard to Define, but you'd know it if you saw it' (2006), Cultural Diplomacy is always there for all to see and to employ.

Unfortunately, following 9/11, Cultural Diplomacy resuscitated only to a false alarm, as in many

instances it was much discussed, even if little understood, in terms of its role as a catalyst for change when applied to particular conflict resolution mechanisms. Agents of doom and gloom chose to portray a world with a bleak future, torn between fundamentalists on the one side and pacifists on the other. The old adage of 'us and them' resurfaced as the sole component that justifies military intervention or occupation in the name of peace and order.

Indeed, our time could be described as one of constant transition. On the one hand, you have Europe that has just started recovering from a prolonged economic crisis, and, on the other hand, thousands, if not millions, of disgruntled young citizens, who saw their hopes of engaging in a decent job die away. It comes as no surprise that an emphasis on dialogue has, once again, come to the fore and that any attempt at effective peace-building measures should start from an understanding of what constitutes our belief. Connecting with people's needs and understanding their concerns with adequate respect to their notion of truth is one way how bridges could actually start being built.

Culture is a co-efficient agent that has the potential to bring about both change in a given situation and a positive attitude towards new things. In a way, the Catholic Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, which was established in 1964 as a result of Vatican Council II, is a claim in this direction.

Openness towards the truth is openness towards individuals, societies and states that require constructive connectivity. In a sense, as Geoffrey Wiseman 2 notes, we seem to have neglected for a long time the deeply rooted, state-based diplomatic culture with its own distinctive institutions, values and norms. Such neglect may have had unwanted

repercussions of no small proportion, like the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Arab Spring in Northern Africa and obviously the ongoing instability in the Middle East. Such claims, while proferring a roadmap which puts culture as an agent of change, also tends to unfold an age-long reality that goes on the lines that, unless world religions live up to their calling, no peace could possibly ever take place.

Hence, if we could here limit our scope of reflection to a faith-based diplomacy, culture fits neatly as an interpretative conjecture, which lays the foundation to further understanding of faith-based diplomatic activity within context of a particular tradition, community, set of values and the perception that those tools available are to be used so as to obtain long-term results.

Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The degree of confidence that religion has on people can easily replace confidence in long-tested political failures. As Cynthia Sampson points out: "In societies, in which the government is widely viewed as illegitimate, or centralised authority has broken down altogether, organised religion may be the only institution retaining some measure of credibility, trust and moral authority among the population at large."³

Therefore, what sometimes is an under-valued claim towards the religions' potential in peace-building operations, should come forward as a valuable depository of experience, which connects with people's immediate needs and fears, thus enabling a better understanding of a particular situation on the ground.

This cannot take place if we move in a direction where religion continues to be considered as a region which should stay away from political involvement. Such claims of distinct separation between religion and state, while making sense in situations where the mere mention of religion regrettably fuels disgruntlement, in other cases it may be the determining factor to reconciliation between opposing parties.

Hence the need to adopt a diplomatic outlook towards specific scenarios, where the involvement

of religion provides the required structure to work for peace on faith lines. One such case is the Middle East peace process which, while badly in need of reconciliation of the opposing parties, will not take place, unless there is the involvement of religious believers sharing the same negotiating table alongside secular actors. Indeed, religion should be part of the solution and not part of the problem, especially if religious practices counter messages of hate and calls for violence by fostering mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation ..

If we really want to engage in the dynamics of what may constitute true peace building processes, it is essential that one points out to the importance attached to a fundamental need for all religions to reach out to one another, as much as recognise the wealth of experience they possess and which could bring forward to the service of peace and reconciliation among nations .

In other words, Ecumenism, or the need of dialogue among religions, is the backbone upon which any discourse, related to intra-religious appreciation and commitment towards closer collaboration, could actually take place and flourish. Such claim towards openness and mutual recognition took a radical turn with the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* by Pope Paul VI in 1965, a Vatican Council II declaration on the relationship of the Catholic Church with non-Christian religions.

Another significant initiative towards more Inter-faith understanding among different religions was the setting up of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (1968) as symbol of goodwill among Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists.

Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Both attempts, while recognising the need to enhanced assimilation and pooling of ideas, made one important statement, namely that, notwithstanding the dogmatic differences and faith perceptions between religions, all should seek to work harder and bolder towards the retaining of unity in diversity. It is only with such universal claim that any extra-religious reconciliation could possibly become more equivocal and less paradoxical,

especially in view of the profound sense of ultimacy that religions in their own right seek to proclaim. On the other hand, Cultural Diplomacy is a basic tenet employed to bring about the much needed change for the better. Any attempt to safeguard a balanced social environment is to make the democratic narrative more comprehensive to the needs of the individuals. This could only take place if all parties stop and listen to what the other has to say.

Pope Francis has emphasised this concept in his message prepared for this year's World Communications Day⁴, when he said that we should rediscover the beauty of 'neighbourliness' as "Communication is really about realizing that we are all human beings, children of God."

Unfortunately, it is most true that, in today's world, very few people feel well listened to by others. It is telling that, in spite of the advances in communication and technology that we have at our disposal, we continue to find it hard to break the barriers that make our relationship better and much more open to reconciliation.

Indeed, many of the conflicts have their basis in simply inadequate listening to one another. Most noteworthy is the continuity in both message and manner of application adopted by both Pope Francis and Blessed soon to be declared Saint Pope

John Paul II. Their attitude towards an ecumenism based on the cohorts of extended communication has all the qualities that address the dangers attached to a culture of artificial proclivity, that choose to ignore the detail for want of more urgent homogeneous results. Such claims are also widely shared by the Dalai Lama, who in his Nobel Prize acceptance address of 1989 in Oslo, went on to say that "The problems we face today, violent conflicts, destruction of nature, poverty, hunger, and so on are human created problems which can be resolved through human effort, understanding and a development of a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood."⁵ It seems as if these words were said yesterday.

Mr President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to stress that our aim as politicians and religious leaders is to continue leading by example, giving our respective peoples a true sense of belonging and co-sharing in the decisions that we take. It is through the enhancement of such vivid involvement that surpasses religions as much as the communal experience of faith that we could aspire to reach a common objective of happiness and peaceful existence for all.

Thank you ●

Biography

President Anglu Farrugia Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta

Angelo Farrugia is a Maltese politician who is currently the Speaker at the House of Representatives of Malta. Previously he served Deputy Leader of the Labor Party, a Member of Parliament and Shadow Minister for Work, workers' rights and parliamentary affairs.

He was first elected to Parliament in 1996, and subsequently elected again in 1998, 2003 and 2008. He served as Chairman on the House Committee of the Consideration of Bills (1996–98), and as a general member since 1998. Between 1998 and 2008 Farrugia served as Shadow Minister for Justice and in 2008 was elected the Labor Party's Deputy Leader of Parliamentary Affairs. He was also appointed Opposition Spokesperson for Employment and Workers' Rights in the same year, and in April 2013 he was nominated as Speaker of the House of Representatives

"Fostering Interreligious Communication in Cyprus"

A lecture by Director Christos Koukliotis, Director, Office of the Holy Archbishop of Cyprus, on behalf of Archbishop Chrysostomos II, the Archbishop of Cyprus.

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



I have to clarify that I am delivering an address of Archbishop Chrysostomos II the Archbishop of Cyprus.

Your graces, eminences, reverend fathers, your excellencies, dear ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

I greet you all in peace. Peace is not a word for greeting, a word signifying the absence of war, it is something more than a simple word.

The notion of peace is signifying the process of God among people, regardless of their religious believe. The notion of peace is a core value for all religions and reaches out to all those people who seek peace according to their own religious traditions and commitments. Especially at a time when the whole humanity is caught to find answers and solutions to many substantial and major problems that our world is facing, religion can play a key role and reveal the way of love and respect for the right of each person to believe, to dream, to hope for something that is unique to each of us.

Recognizing the fact that working for peace constitutes the primary expression of our responsibility, which is grounded on the essential goodness of all human beings by vision of being in gods image. We have to face the challenge and to

move forward, beyond mere rhetorical expressions. Our ethical values must be incarnated into actions that we contribute to a culture of peace. Therefore, alternative ways that reject violence and war must constantly be pursuit and persistently proclaimed. We have to reaffirm our common values of life, mutual respect and understanding and we have to foster interfaith dialogue within the spirit of the Holy Scripture.

Let us love one another, for love is God. Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Distinguished participants my homeland Cyprus is characterized by its multicultural natures throughout its 10.000 year history. The island has been exposed to many civilizations and cultures as it stands at the crossroad of the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa. Each culture has left a permanent mark in the course of our history. In addition, Cyprus has always been a place of religious pluralism where Greek orthodox, and Latin Catholic, Maronite, Armenian, Orthodox and Turkish Muslims, as well people from other faiths exist. Each religion is a bearer of the culture of the respected community and the marker of their identity. People from all these communities lived together in peace and harmony for centuries.

It grieves us to have to say that for the past half century human rights and religious freedom have been obvious victims of the political conflict and the division of our island. According to the charter of Human Rights, freedom of worship is the most important manifestation of religious freedom, from which derives the right of unrestricted worship. Stakeholders therefore, should not hinder the expression of the freedom of worship. It is their obligation to remove any barriers or restrictions on the exercise of worship.

Unfortunately, in the northern part of the island

religious freedom has been neither respected nor implemented by the fact of all there is there. For our people our churches are sacred places in which the sacraments of the Christian Orthodox faith are taking place, leading the faithful to become participants shepherds of the grace of God. These are the places in which our people participate in any expression of religious and social life, from their birth to their death.

They form a strong spiritual and emotional connection between our people and our churches and other religious monuments have been developed. For this reason it is important that our people should be able to access our churches and to be able worship in them. Until this day, permission to hold religious services is very limited and is only given for a very small number of churches.

Christian Orthodox monuments alone are more than 570 in number. While there are many others belonging to the Maronite and Armenian churches. The vast majority of these churches have had all their decorations, furnishing and their equipment removed and had been turned into museums, cultural youth and sport centers, and even into stables. There are also churches that have been converted into mosques, while some others are inaccessible within military areas.

In some cases churches have been demolished. Our religious sites and monuments, our churches and monasteries, all that is sacred to us, our cemeteries were plundered and destroyed in a brutal way. As a result unique treasures of the existence and presence of Christian population in the north of Cyprus vanished forever. Moreover, religious items and art crafts of great importance for our faith, such as holy icons, sacred vassals, and prayer books have been stolen. In addition, looters have removed unique and rare paintings, frescos and mosaic from churches with historic and religious importance. Many of them were illegally send abroad and sold to auction houses, galleries and private collections.

This is not the case in the area controlled by the republic of Cyprus. Our Turkish Cypriot Muslim compatriots for nearly five decades have similarly

been prevented by the de facto authorities to visit their villages and worship in their mosque and pray in peace.

We always stress the need for the freedom of the religious expression of our people in the land of their ancestors. This applies for all our people, Muslims and Christians alike. There must be an end to all of this. For decades our churches have remained abandoned and silence, since neither access nor worship was permitted in them. Undoubtedly, the above situation consists in part of the tragic consequences of the division of the island and bleak image of the recent past and present.

The Church of Cyprus knows that only through a sincere and open dialogue with the Turkish Cypriots it will be possible to overcome our differences and built mutual trust. This is why we have personally been promoting dialogue with the Turkish Cypriot religious leadership, and we shall continue to do so for the sake of justice, peace and mutual understanding.

I have no illusions and I know very well that there is a difficult path to be followed. Many challenges to be faced. There exists no interreligious communication for more than 50 years, breaking down the stereotypes of the other is one of the biggest challenges.

We understand that interreligious dialogue is essential for breaking down any physical or psychological barriers that divide the island. As the special report in religious freedom rightly says to the report on the United Nations Human Rights Council, regular communication across the religious boundaries is the most important precondition for fostering and understanding, preventing or overcoming distrust between religious or believe groups. Interreligious communication can help replace stereotypes and prejudices, by real experiences.

For that reason we responded at once to the invitation of the embassy of Sweden in Cyprus, which initiated the first dialogue among religious leaders of Cyprus. This was in 2009. Since then we started meetings with the present Mufti, Doctor Talib Atalay, and his predecessor Mufti Doctor Yusuf Suicmez. The main


 International Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy & Religion - Rome, Italy; March 31st - April 3rd, 2014
 

purpose of these first meetings was to create a solid ground on which the two religious leaders would be able to meet regularly and discuss their problems to develop trust and mutual understanding on issues related to religious freedom and human rights' respect in the island.

In this process we understand that no giant leaps can be made immediately, but only small steps forward. Since 2009, a lot of steps forwards have been made. Indicatively I can mention the following: in the context of promoting interreligious dialogue in 2011 we organized an interfaith young encounter with the participation of Greek and Turkish Cypriots together with young Israelis and Palestinians. The main purpose of this initiative was to bring together young people of different faiths: Christians, Muslims and Jews. And from different nationalities and, through dialogue, to understand better each others aspiration, concerns and believes. In addition, young people had the opportunity to discuss how each religion teaches human rights, including the right of religious freedom and worship and this teaching can be applied in their daily life. Moreover, in 2012 Bishop Porfirio of Neapolis visited Hala Sultan Tekke. For the first time, the Mufti agreed to send his representative to visit Apostol Andrea's monastery together with bishop Christopher of Carpasia. Unfortunately, the latter did not materialize, as a consequence of the travel ban, which was imposed on Bishop Christopher of Caparsia by the Turkish Cypriot authorities.

We were also able to solve practical problems which which have been in the way of confidence building. For example, used candles of the Apostol Andrea's monastery have been transported to government controlled area for recycling. With our intervention Imam Shakir, who is responsible for Hala Sultan Tekke, Larnaka was able to have access and use a locked up office and meeting spaces at Tekke.

At the request of the mufti we intervened to allow for the transport of carpets to cover the needs of the mosques in the northern part. Breakthroughs in our efforts for freedom of movement and freedom of worship was the mutual agreement we achieved that lifted the ban of the free movement of bishop

Christopher of Carpasia. Who was able to celebrate and to conduct the Divine Liturgy in Apostol Andrea's monastery in November 2013, for the first time after four years. At the same time the mufti was granted special permission to cross to the government controlled area and pray to Hala Sultan Tekke for the first time. Under this special permission Mufti was able to visit that on the occasion of our name day, in order to congratulate us personally. It was the first time after decades to experience such a gesture in Cyprus.

The need to include in our dialogue the Maronite and the Armenian communities within the dialogue became obvious soon in our meetings and our discussions. The Maronite Archbishop Joseph Soueif and the Armenian Archbishop Varoujan Hergelian welcomed this idea. All of us agreed with the principle of establishing the first interreligious council for peace and we expressed our commitment to it.

This common commitment was reiterated again in September 2013 in an interreligious roundtable meeting with the UN special rapporteur when he visited Cyprus. Since then we have developed an excellent cooperation with the special rapporteur on the freedom of religion or believe and his team, as well as the staff of the UN office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The office of the religious strike, which has facilitated the dialogue under the hospice of the embassy of Sweden in Nicosia, assisted the religious leaders to study and respond to the report of special rapporteur of religious freedom or believe and commented this report on the UN Human Rights Council session in March 2013. The independent expert acknowledged and expressed his payers and appreciation to our efforts as religious leaders to promote and advance interreligious communication for the protection of human rights and religious freedom in our long suffered island as one of the few examples for interreligious communication and peace building in the world.

Finally, our religious leaders were encouraged by the joined message of the political leaders agreed

 "The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"
 

on February the 11th of 2014, stating that the status quo in the island is unacceptable, that human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as each other distinct individualities should be respected. As religious leaders, we welcomed the resume of the negotiations with the support of the Ambassador of Sweden in Cyprus and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, we should, as religious leaders, join the declaration in which we underlined that:

"Religion was and still is a victim of the protracted conflicts. For too many decades we have not been able to meet, to listen and to understand each other. In the last years, we agreed to meet regularly, openly expressing our respect and listen to another. Our intent is to leave the past behind, get to know each other and understand the others' needs. Together, we have tried to find practical solutions, build trust and confidence and we succeeded. We also affirmed our responsibility to

ensure that the political conflict will be resolved, and we expressed our determination to stimulate the dialogue, knowing that there is no alternative to communication, cooperation and coexistence.

Distinguished participants, external peace derives from internal peace and, consequently, can only be achieved if all of us, as individuals, experience the peace that can be found in our hearts and in our souls. This inner peace is given by God and it is not subjected to the ravages of the people and of time. It is ours the power to break down those psychological barriers that still exist inside us. It is this inner attempting that has the power to demolish the walls dividing our people and our world.

"Peace, I live with you, my Peace, I give to you. It is not as the world gives that I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let it be afraid."

Thank you ●

Biography

H.E. The Archbishop Christomos II Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta

He was elected Metropolitan (Bishop) of Paphos on 25 February 1978, and his episcopal consecration took place on 26 February 1978. During his time as a bishop he represented the Autocephalous of the Church of Cyprus in many conferences abroad, dedicated fifty new regional temples and chapels in the Paphos District, and maintained and attended all the churches of his metropolitan periphery. He also founded five Byzantine museums which contain the church treasures of the Paphos District. He played an important role in confronting and correcting irregularities and mismanagement in the Archdiocese, helping to preserve the Ecclesiastical fortune.

When Archbishop Chrysostomos I was removed from office, due to illness, Metropolitan Chrysostomos was elected as locum tenens, and Archiepiscopal elections were set for 24 September 2006. In October 2006, Metropolitan Chrysostomos became the new Archbishop of Cyprus as Chrysostomos II.

“PAM approach to promote and facilitate interfaith dialogue and its applications in the Mediterranean”

A lecture by Sen. Francesco Maria Amoroso (President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean)

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



Presidents, excellencies, fellow parliamentarians, delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to stand before you as President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM).

PAM is an international organisation established in 2006, when the Interparliamentary Union resolved to transform its “Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean” into an independent international parliament, with its own legal personality, focused on the Mediterranean. Since then, PAM has been a promoter of political, economic and social cooperation among Mediterranean countries, with a view to ensuring durable peace and prosperity to its peoples, through the instrument of parliamentary diplomacy.

Our Assembly works through three standing committees: Political and Security-related Cooperation; Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation; Dialogue among Civilisations and Human Rights.

In 2009, PAM was granted permanent observer status at the UN General Assembly, a body with

which we have had close cooperation for a number of years.

PAM is an elite operational tool for parliamentary diplomacy. It provides a unique forum, with an almost exclusively Mediterranean membership, where countries are represented on an equal basis and which reaches out to countries like the US and Russia, that have strong interests in the region. Diplomacy is the art of negotiation and I can confidently say that dialogue among civilizations and religions is an essential tool to pursue parliamentary diplomacy.

Ladies and gentlemen,

together, we can try to achieve the ideal conditions to build a more equal world, on condition that we start working locally, nationally and regionally. It is also true that if we imagine a world like this, we should bear in mind that peoples are divided into communities with their own geo-political, economic and cultural backgrounds.

Modern challenges, like migration, climate change, renewed domestic conflicts, corruption, organised crime and unemployment – to mention just a few – call for a common effort, more than a minimum of common sense and, most importantly, common measures to establish mutual respect and lasting peace in a stable region able to attract foreign investments.

PAM’s Third Standing Committee, which is responsible for intercultural dialogue and human rights, has a special focus on dialogue among the religions and cultures of our region.

In this framework, our Assembly has established collaboration links with several international institutions and organisations, like the Anna Lindh

Foundation, the Mediterranean Citizens Assembly and the UN Alliance of Civilizations.

On the basis of an agreed notion that dialogue and respect provide the groundwork for peace and reconciliation, PAM reaffirms its commitment to uphold the fundamental principle of freedom of worship for every citizen and community in the Mediterranean region and firmly condemns any act of sectarian violence. The Assembly’s philosophy includes the promotion of cooperation among parliaments in the region including, but not limited to, the harmonization of legislation on the protection of religious minorities. Interreligious dialogue is of key importance, since 80% of Mediterranean citizens identify as believers. It follows that religion can and should be a basic tool to attain the goal of peace and peaceful coexistence among peoples. Also prominent is the need to stay clear of fundamentalism, to bring down the walls of intolerance and the cultural barriers that are often the nourishment of sectarian clashes and violence.

In this connection, I would like to emphasize some initiatives taken by Morocco. Firstly, welcome centres have been established to provide Moroccans moving to France assistance in relation to immigration paperwork, the search for shelter and employment and, if necessary, the provision of training.

This is very rational and is the right way to respond to the needs of your fellow nationals abroad.

Through PAM, I came to realise that one of the goals of this initiative was to keep these young men and women looking for a better life away from mosques and some Imams who preach violence, and encouraging social marginalisation and Islamic fundamentalism.

Still on this wave length, Morocco is currently training a number of Libyan Imams so that, when they return to their country, they can be ambassadors of a moderate and tolerant Islam.

When conventional diplomacy, State and multilateral players find it difficult to face crisis situations, cultural and parliamentary diplomacy become one of the few tools that can be used on the fault lines

between identities (religious, cultural and ethnic), with a view to sustaining mutual respect and dialogue in diversity.

Non-conventional diplomacy is as relevant as ever. There is a need to protect the cultural heritage threatened by the destruction of war, ethnic and religious conflict, but also reckless land development, crime and indifference. Syria is just a case in point. Prominent cultural sites, churches, mosques and monuments are used as military installations, thus becoming targets to be destroyed by the opposing faction. In turn, this fuels even more communal hatred. A recent UNESCO report stresses the ongoing destruction of cultural properties in Syria and calls for international action to protect those sites before it is too late.

I would like to spend a few more words on Syria, where the action of PAM is particularly intense. The solution to the Syrian crisis, as Pope Francis himself pointed out in his message to our General Assembly a few weeks ago, has to be political, not military. The key to resolve the conflict is to be found in dialogue. To quote the Pope: “peace calls for persistent, patient and intelligent dialogue, where there are no losers. Dialogue can prevail over conflict, dialogue can foster the coexistence of people of different generations which often ignore one another; it leads citizens with different ethnic origin and beliefs to coexist. For this reason, it is of vital importance that dialogue grow and involve people from all walks of life and beliefs, like a network of peace protecting the world and, particularly, its weaker members”.

A few days ago at Cairo, I heard this same message coming from Egyptian Government and Human Rights Council officials.

The Mediterranean has radically changed. In the democratization process following the Arab Spring, where thousands of people have fought for their freedom, free elections were finally held in numerous countries. Sweeping constitutional reforms were voted in such countries as Morocco, Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia.

In such context of ongoing change, ensuring regional stability and security is essential for the

full accomplishment of political rights, freedom of worship, social justice, dignity of the individual, access to the labour market and availability of affordable primary goods and is a prerequisite for peace and social and economic development in the region.

Here, we need to ensure that culture, education, training and the universal values shared by the three great monotheistic religions become as one.

Is there a role for Parliaments in order to attain these goals?

PAM has dealt with this issue since its inception. As early as 2008, a report and a resolution on "Freedom of religion and dialogue among cultures" were passed unanimously.

Since then, the representatives of the Vatican, the Islamic conference and the Jewish communities always meet at our meetings and share their views with our members. Operational initiatives have developed from these opportunities, like our action with the Christian churches in Egypt since 2011 and, more recently, a PAM delegation was sent to Damascus a couple of months ago, to meet

with Syrian MPs and monitor, together with the Apostolic Nuncio, the regional challenges raised by the conflict.

A few days ago, Syria came again on top of our agenda, following the request of our Israeli colleagues, to solicit protection for Druze communities living in border areas that were occupied by jihadis.

In general, the assistance required of PAM in the democratic transition processes in Libya, Egypt and Tunisia originates from the need to develop consistent and tangible regional policies, that should take culture and religion into account. There is a lot to do, often in challenging circumstances.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the symposium organisers and thank them for allowing me to tackle all these sensible issues, that are of paramount importance for the international community.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I wish you a fruitful meeting and thank you very much for your attention.

Biography

Sen. Francesco Maria Amoruso President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean

Francesco Amoruso, born on 1 August 1956 in Bisceglie (Bari - Italy), graduated in Political Science and since his youth he has been actively engaged in social and political affairs. He is a member of the "Popolo della libertà" party, for which he is the Coordinator in the Region of Puglia.

He formerly served as town councillor in Bisceglie and was the first regional coordinator of the National Alliance party in Puglia. In 1994 he was elected for the first time to the Chamber of Deputies. In subsequent elections, in 1996, 2001 and 2006 he was re-elected to the Chamber of Deputies. In 2008, following the elections in Puglia, he took his seat in the Senate.

With the sole exception of the period 2006-08, he always sat on the Foreign Affairs Committee of both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. He has also served as:

- *Chairperson of the Committee for Italians Abroad;*
- *Member of the Parliamentary Committee for Oversight of the Enforcement of the Schengen Agreement, Europol Activities and Immigration Affairs;*
- *Member of the Parliamentary Delegation to the Council of Europe and the Assembly of the Western European Union;*
- *Member of the Italian delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.*

He also served as Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee for Oversight of Social Security Agencies (2001-06) and Deputy Chairperson of the Chamber of Deputies' Committee on Employment (2006-08).

In the current legislature he serves as Secretary MP of the Foreign Affairs Committee. In this capacity he has served, inter alia, as the Rapporteur for major bills ratifying international agreements. He is also the Deputy Chair of the Italian Delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Chairperson of the IPU Friendship Groups between Italy and Scandinavian countries, and between Italy and the Principality of Monaco. In the present Parliament he has promoted the institution of the Tunisia-Italy Parliamentary Friendship Association, of which he has been appointed Chairperson. He is also the Honorary President of the Polish-Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In 2009 he was appointed, upon designation by the Presidents of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, member of the Italian Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM). He has coordinated, among other responsibilities, the PAM working group on the protection of the Mediterranean Sea on offshore oil exploration and drilling. He also tabled in the Italian Parliament a bill (No. 1571) on the establishment of a "Mediterranean Day". Since his appointment on the Italian Delegation to PAM, he has served as Vice President and Chairperson of the Second Standing Committee on Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation and Development, till his election to President of PAM in October 2012.

“Respecting and Protecting Religious Heritage: An Important Contribution to Interfaith Dialogue”

A Lecture by Dr. Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis, Former Foreign Minister of Cyprus

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



others. Millions of people have suffered over the years from persecution, from genocide in all parts of the world, in human treatment, discrimination and extermination because of their very religion, of their very cultural and ethnic background.

Thousands of invaluable religious and cultural monuments and sites and objects have been destroyed and looted in the hands of aggressors and conquerors in their deliberate pursuit of ethnically cleansing the areas they conquer by forcing people to flee. The second part is by erasing every trace of their heritage and identity. The perpetrators in most instances are state and military actors as well as - and we have seen this in Syria in recent years - paramilitary, extremist and terrorist groups. The victims are on the one hand innocent people; men, women and children. We have seen over one hundred thousand people lose their lives in the last two years in Syria, but in also other parts of the world. And on the other hand, archaeological and religious heritage objects and monuments which stood intact for centuries and even millennia are now the target of destruction and plundering. In most cases, this destruction, pillage and plunder involves religious, cultural and historic buildings, churches, mosques, synagogues and Buddhist temples and have taken place in many parts of the world throughout history. More notably, in recent times during the Second World War by the Nazis against Jewish cultural heritage, as well as during the armed conflicts and military interventions in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Libya, Syria, Mali or my own country, Cyprus – just to say a few examples; there are maybe hundreds more examples around the world in all continents.

Respecting each other, appreciating our different identities, our different cultures and religions is

Interfaith dialogue is meant to increase our understanding, our appreciation and our respect for other religious systems and institutions and thereby enhance our sensitivity towards the cultures and beliefs of other peoples with different religious and cultural backgrounds. This in turn facilitates dialogue, and dialogue builds bridges between peoples bringing us closer to tolerance, to partnership, to friendship and ultimately to peace. Interfaith dialogue is also of paramount importance in multicultural societies with different ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious groups living together and where respect for each other's religion, culture and identity constitutes the cornerstone for a harmonious coexistence.

With have heard already from his eminence, the grand mufti of Bosnia about the example of his own country with its problems and the way to solve these problems and bring harmonious coexistence of the different groups that exist there. Interfaith and intercultural dialogue remains extremely important in our world today which is ravaged by extremism, terrorism, by acts of aggression, by intolerance, fanaticism and lack of respect for

manifested first and foremost in recognising the value and appreciating the importance of protecting cultural heritage. Without such respect, without the acceptance and tolerance of other cultures and religions, without embracing them as creations of our common humanity as belonging to the cultural heritage of mankind, we will never reach peace and we shall never reach understanding among countries and peoples. The protection of the cultural heritage of each people is the property of all mankind, to be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

Since we are in Rome, a Mediterranean country, we have heard a lot these past two days about the Mediterranean with its invaluable historical presence and civilisation it is important to emphasise that the preservation and the protection of the cultural heritage and the religious heritage of the Mediterranean region - which has also been called the 'Cradle of Civilisation' should be the responsibility of all of us, especially under the current dire conditions prevailing in these troubled neighbourhood. We need to protect this invaluable culture and religious heritage which is being destroyed and plundered especially in the countries that are ravaged by war, internal conflict or military occupation. This is particularly true with regard to Syria, Egypt, Libya, other parts of the Middle East and my own country, Cyprus. We all need to join forces in order to preserve the heritage entrusted to us by preceding generations, to enable us to bequeath this heritage to the generations to come. We must not allow war and conflict to destroy the treasures that constitute the cultural heritage of mankind. This is why it is important to place, at the very heart of all interfaith and intercultural dialogue the need to respect and protect cultural and religious heritage, this is why any such dialogue will remain inconclusive if it is not founded on mutual commitments towards

respecting and protecting each other's heritage. This is why it is important that gatherings as the one we are attending should send a strong message to the world that interfaith and intercultural dialogue cannot tolerate the targeting of cultural and religious heritage in the context of armed conflict. This is why it is imperative to collectively, and to individually act and take measures in order for existing international conventions to be fully respected.

Finally, this is why it is vital to invest in educating the new generation, and I see a lot of young people in this room. To teach them the importance of respecting each other's culture and faith. The aim is to instil among the young people the idea of safeguarding humanity's history, our own history as well as the history of other peoples. Thus, laying the foundation for a better and for a more peaceful, for a more safe and for a more humane world. During period of crisis, such as the one we are living in today, we have to redouble our efforts and create ring-fences to protect the ancient civilisations and the cultural and religious heritage of mankind. We owe an invaluable, collective debt to this heritage. If we fail in our efforts to protect it then we lose key evidence of humanity's unbroken presence. Then we also lose the opportunity to bring together, to bring closer in a peaceful and harmonious coexistence and mutual respect the different cultures and different religions of the world, on the other hand if we joined forces and remained solid in our commitment not to tolerate destruction and plundering of cultural and religious heritage, we shall succeed. This is our common challenge but also is our common contribution to the success of interfaith and intercultural dialogue. This is going to be our contribution to peace.

Thank you so much.

Biography

Dr. Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis
Former Foreign Minister of Cyprus

The Hon. Dr. Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis (born in Limassol, Cyprus, in 1949) is a graduate of Law and Public Law, and Political Science at the University of Athens. She obtained a PhD in Sociology and Political Science from the University of Helsinki in 1979. Dr. Kozakou-Marcoullis served in the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations (1980-1988), as a member of the Cyprus Question Division (1988-1993), as Director of the Permanent Secretary's Office (1993-1996) and as Director of the Cyprus Question and EU-Turkey Affairs Division.

The Hon. Dr. Kozakou-Marcoullis served as a diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1980 to 2007. Specifically, from 1998 to 2003 she served as Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the United States of America, with parallel accreditation to Canada, Brazil, Guyana, Jamaica, the World Bank, the IMF, ICAO and the Organization of American States, and as Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to Sweden (and all Nordic/ Baltic States), as well as Ambassador to Lebanon and Jordan (2005-2007). In 2007 Dr. Kozakou-Marcoullis was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus.

From April 2008 until her appointment as Minister of Communication and Works in 2010, The Hon. Dr. Kozakou - Marcoullis served as the Head of the Working Group on Property.

The Hon. Dr. Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus from August 2011 to February 2013.

During her career as a diplomat she represented Cyprus in numerous Assemblies, Congresses and Conferences of the European Union, the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth, the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

The Hon. Dr. Kozakou-Marcoullis has published a large number of articles on a wide range of issues, including the Cyprus Problem, the United Nations, the European Union, Foreign Policy, Cultural Diplomacy, and Gender Equality.

"The Role of Religious Communities in Peace Promotion -Bosnian Model"

A lecture by His Eminence Husein ef. Kavazovic, Grand Mufti of Bosnia & Herzegovina

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



Dear Excellencies, ladies and Gentlemen and dear Friends,

Peace in a human is a priority for its good health and peaceful life. Peace in a society is the priority for development and improvement of the community in all parts of the world. Peace that is founded on freedom and justice is by itself a great value and it's the main goal and ideal of most human beings. Peace is a natural way how it should be the balance that the Lord himself has made and the humans day by day don't do it as they should. When humans don't treat themselves and the others with peace it leads to wars and killings. Along with human life and material distractions there is a collateral damage that it hurts also the trust between people without which the human organization cannot function normally. That anticivilized situation has caused the wars in the recent history of Bosnia-Herzegovina. From all the religion organizations in the post-conflict period it is expected to help ensure that the damage will be fixed that the war has caused and to build up together the peace and to regain the trust which is their mission. As soon as that mission comes along with a good will and the good will of religion communities and the authorities, the

question is how to make it happen. The post-war experience of Bosnians can offer some answers on those key questions on how to promote peace.

First of all, the religion communities should be willing to work together to build a common goal which is trust and peace. It is much easier to work with the communities where the causes or the active people in the war but for those that have been the actors during the conflict it is much harder. The Bosnian experience shows that it is needed to have an external-external helpers and people who give back the will to fight for the peace as well as the logistic support to overcome the barriers that have been caused by the war traumas. For example we have a good way of explaining this; the religion communities in Bosnia with the help of the World Conference Religion for Peace and with very good leader of the Religion for Peace, William Vendley, and the American Ambassador Suani Hunt. They were trying for more than a year to combine the forces and to bring the peace together to ask all the human beings to bring the peace and the international trust. Therefore it is not enough just to have a good will to work on the peace reconciliation. It is needed to have good human resources and to fill out all the things needed to do it.

Every religion organization has an individual or different instruments that should work on the cooperation with others. This cooperation improves the building of different bodies or different instruments that are needed to do the international peace reconciliation and to work on the common goals. The Islamic community in Bosnia and Herzegovina has made a good platform for dialogue in which all of their officials are needed to do it with the others. Along with that the Islamic community in Bosnia-Herzegovina has formed the Commission

for Interfaith Dialogue and has the permanent associate for inter-religious interfaith relations in the Cabinet of Ray Surlam along with the other religion communities.

These things are performed by a lot of interfaith communications and interfaith corporations to build the peace and they are making it mostly through seminars and conferences that are supported by NGO's though the whole world as well as diplomatic offices in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The experience has showed that there is not enough room for one person to act but to promote the peace and dialogue it has a better efficiency if many people are doing it together. Working together is much easier to accomplish the goals. That's why the four traditional faith societies in Bosnia-Herzegovina which are Islamic Community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Catholic Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Jewish Community, they have a common goal to fight along, to create peace and to regain the trust that has been broken and they have formed the Interfaith Religious Dialogue Council in which all of those communities are represented. They have a permanent peace and inter religion dialogue as well as the religion pluralism; this has been formed by the Council.

First of all it's the law group, group for young people, group for women, education group and group for media. One Bosnian Muslim expert from the beginning of the 20th century has said that in the world there are lot of educated people but not people that are raised well with good manners. This thesis has shown that even today the worst crimes committed including the Genocide has been made by academics, academic professors, doctors and others. They had all the knowledge needed but they didn't have morals and they didn't have faith. Regardless of the fact how much the religion communities have helped to improve this they have been invited to help. Bosnia-Herzegovina is a good example of not investing enough on to education.

For generations young people were taught that they have to see others as an enemy, a person that they have to revenge or punish. Those ideas have killed Bosnian women, children and old people.

These ideas and not the dynamites have distracted the Bosnian houses, religion institutions and other main things of one culture, one civilization and the Bosnian state. These ideas are the biggest threat to the peace, not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina but in the whole world. The only way to reduce this is by education and tell people that the others shouldn't be seen as their enemies but as their next door neighbor or even potentially a friend. The religion institutions in Bosnia-Herzegovina along with Inter religion Council have made significant moves in reducing these judges and the wrong picture of others. In this sense many books have been published about religion, religion customs of these four biggest religion traditions as well as their history and community. Also they have made significant moves and together with others doing a radio show about different religion topics and questions.

A big step can also be made with religion as a permanent subject in the public schools and as part of the material that talks about the others. It has been agreed that all the religion communities should have their representative who writes about his religion and the books that people are learning from. To reeducate someone is much harder and it takes a longer process than educating them. As the Great Al-Ghazali said the first step that should be done is to remove all the prejudice that people have and in their way to put the new more exact thoughts about the difference between people that should be respected and should be the priority in retaining peace. To conclude, I would like to say that the permanent peace and trust along the people, nations and religions is very important. If there is no trust there is no peace.

Lies and lack of trust feeds itself with prejudices and misinformations as well as not with good knowledge. The trust is built by true justice and authentic knowledge. Trust is along with other feelings the feeling that a person has inside of it. In its built there are some religion institutions that are crucial and that have the best infrastructure to do so. The main method of building the trust is one of the basic things that religion institutions

deal with. People that have been raised badly this is the method of how it should be done to reeducate them. For everyone, they should see that religion institutions are a good way of promoting peace and

trust and it is good to invite people to ask them to do well and not bad. Thank you for this opportunity.

Biography

His Eminence Husein ef. Kavazovic Grand Mufti of Bosnia & Herzegovina

Husein Kavazović is a Bosnian Islamic cleric and the New Bosnian Grand Mufti since September 2012, after Mufti of Tuzla. Mr. Kavazović is the 14th Bosnian Grand Mufti since 1882. As Grand Mufti, he is the successor of Mustafa Cerić.

Mr. Kavazović studied Islamic Law at Al-Azhar University in Cairo between 1985 and 1990. In his election program, Kavazović stressed the promotion of cooperation with other religious communities and a wider "integration of women into the work of the Islamic religious community."

"Religious freedom, the path to peace"

A lecture by His Eminence Ignazio Sanna (Archbishop of Oristano, Italy)

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



I would like to start my keynote Address with the presentation of Pope's Benedict XVI message for the world day of peace in the year 2011, whose topic was precisely "religious freedom path to peace". I would like to summarize first what Pope Benedict means for religious freedom and peace, and then, in a second time, to speak about some possible paths of peace promoted by religious freedom.

First of all, according to Benedict XVI, "religious freedom is an essential good: each person must be able freely to exercise the right to profess and manifest, individually or in community, his or her own religion or faith, in public and in private, in teaching, in practice, in publications, in worship and in ritual observances. There should be no obstacles should he or she eventually wish to belong to another religion or profess none at all. In this context, international law is a model and an essential point of reference for states, insofar as it allows no derogation from religious freedom, as long as the just requirements of public order are observed. The international order thus recognizes that rights of a religious nature have the same status as the right to life and to personal freedom, as proof of the fact that they belong to the essential core of

human rights, to those universal and natural rights which human law can never deny".

"Religious freedom is not the exclusive patrimony of believers, but of the whole family of the earth's peoples. It is an essential element of a constitutional state; it cannot be denied without at the same time encroaching on all fundamental rights and freedoms, since it is their synthesis and keystone. It is "the litmus test for the respect of all the other human rights". While it favours the exercise of our most specifically human faculties, it creates the necessary premises for the attainment of an integral development which concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension".

Religious freedom, like every freedom, proceeds from the personal sphere and is achieved in relationship with others. Freedom without relationship is not full freedom. Religious freedom is not limited to the individual dimension alone, but is attained within one's community and in society, in a way consistent with the relational being of the person and the public nature of religion.

Relationship is a decisive component in religious freedom, which impels the community of believers to practise solidarity for the common good. In this communitarian dimension, each person remains unique and unrepeatable, while at the same time finding completion and full realization.

The contribution of religious communities to society is undeniable. Numerous charitable and cultural institutions testify to the constructive role played by believers in the life of society. More important still is religion's ethical contribution in the political sphere. Religion should not be marginalized or prohibited, but seen as making an effective contribution to the promotion of the common good. In this context mention should be made of the religious dimension

of culture, built up over centuries thanks to the social and especially ethical contributions of religion. This dimension is in no way discriminatory towards those who do not share its beliefs, but instead reinforces social cohesion, integration and solidarity.

In a globalized world marked by increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies, the great religions can serve as an important factor of unity and peace for the human family. On the basis of their religious convictions and their reasoned pursuit of the common good, their followers are called to give responsible expression to their commitment within a context of religious freedom. Amid the variety of religious cultures, there is a need to value those elements which foster civil coexistence, while rejecting whatever is contrary to the dignity of men and women.

The public space which the international community makes available for the religions and their proposal of what constitutes a "good life" helps to create a measure of agreement about truth and goodness, and a moral consensus; both of these are fundamental to a just and peaceful coexistence. The leaders of the great religions, thanks to their position, their influence and their authority in their respective communities, are the first ones called to mutual respect and dialogue.

Christians, for their part, are spurred by their faith in God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, to live as brothers and sisters who encounter one another in the Church and work together in building a world where individuals and peoples "shall not hurt or destroy ... for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Is 11:9).

For the Church, dialogue between the followers of the different religions represents an important means of cooperating with all religious communities for the common good. The Church herself rejects nothing of what is true and holy in the various religions. "She has a high regard for those ways of life and conduct, precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women".

For Benedict XVI "Peace is a gift of God and at the same time a task which is never fully completed. A society reconciled with God is closer to peace, which is not the mere absence of war or the result of military or economic supremacy, much less deceptive ploys or clever manipulation. Rather, peace is the result of a process of purification and of cultural, moral and spiritual elevation involving each individual and people, a process in which human dignity is fully respected. I invite all those who wish to be peacemakers, especially the young, to heed the voice speaking within their hearts and thus to find in God the stable point of reference for attaining authentic freedom, the inexhaustible force which can give the world a new direction and spirit, and overcome the mistakes of the past. In the words of Pope Paul VI, to whose wisdom and farsightedness we owe the institution of the World Day of Peace: "It is necessary before all else to provide peace with other weapons – different from those destined to kill and exterminate mankind. What are needed above all are moral weapons, those which give strength and prestige to international law – the weapon, in the first place, of the observance of pacts". Religious freedom is an authentic weapon of peace, with an historical and prophetic mission. Peace brings to full fruition the deepest qualities and potentials of the human person, the qualities which can change the world and make it better. It gives hope for a future of justice and peace, even in the face of grave injustice and material and moral poverty".

Paths to peace

Once we have exposed the concept of religious freedom according to pope Benedict XVI, let us now review some possible paths to peace. I would like to start with a quotation of St. Augustine. He says: *ambula per hominem et pervenies ad Deum, walk through men and you will come to God. We can transforme this quotation and say: ambula per Deum et pervenies ad hominem, walk with God and you will come to men. In other words, we can say that there is a deep relation between humanism and religion, between human life and religious life, between what is authentically human and what is authentically religious. Who has a great idea of God*


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has a great idea of men, and viceversa, who has a small idea of God has a small idea of men. There is a deep reciprocity between men's respect and God's respect.

Human person's dignity.

Starting from these considerations, the first path to peace is the implementation of human dignity. "The right to religious freedom is rooted in the very dignity of the human person, whose transcendent nature must not be ignored or overlooked. God created man and woman in his own image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:27). For this reason each person is endowed with the sacred right to a full life, also from a spiritual standpoint. Without the acknowledgement of his spiritual being, without openness to the transcendent, the human person withdraws within himself, fails to find answers to the heart's deepest questions about life's meaning, fails to appropriate lasting ethical values and principles, and fails even to experience authentic freedom and to build a just society".

It could be said that among the fundamental rights and freedoms rooted in the dignity of the person, religious freedom enjoys a special status. When religious freedom is acknowledged, the dignity of the human person is respected at its root, and the ethos and institutions of peoples are strengthened. On the other hand, whenever religious freedom is denied, and attempts are made to hinder people from professing their religion or faith and living accordingly, human dignity is offended, with a resulting threat to justice and peace, which are grounded in that right social order established in the light of Supreme Truth and Supreme Goodness.

Moral freedom

A second path could be moral freedom. "Religious freedom is at the origin of moral freedom. Openness to truth and perfect goodness, openness to God, is rooted in human nature; it confers full dignity on each individual and is the guarantee of full mutual respect between persons. Religious freedom should be understood, then, not merely as immunity from coercion, but even more fundamentally as an ability to order one's own choices in accordance with truth.

Freedom and respect are inseparable; indeed, "in exercising their rights, individuals and social groups are bound by the moral law to have regard for the rights of others, their own duties to others and the common good of all".

A freedom which is hostile or indifferent to God becomes self-negating and does not guarantee full respect for others. A will which believes itself radically incapable of seeking truth and goodness has no objective reasons or motives for acting save those imposed by its fleeting and contingent interests; it does not have an "identity" to safeguard and build up through truly free and conscious decisions. As a result, it cannot demand respect from other "wills", which are themselves detached from their own deepest being and thus capable of imposing other "reasons" or, for that matter, no "reason" at all. The illusion that moral relativism provides the key for peaceful coexistence is actually the origin of divisions and the denial of the dignity of human beings. Hence we can see the need for recognition of a twofold dimension within the unity of the human person: a religious dimension and a social dimension. In this regard, "it is inconceivable that believers should have to suppress a part of themselves – their faith – in order to be active citizens. It should never be necessary to deny God in order to enjoy one's rights".

The family, the school of freedom and peace

A third path to peace is the family as school of freedom. "If religious freedom is the path to peace, religious education is the highway which leads new generations to see others as their brothers and sisters, with whom they are called to journey and work together so that all will feel that they are living members of the one human family, from which no one is to be excluded.

The family founded on marriage, as the expression of the close union and complementarity between a man and a woman, finds its place here as the first school for the social, cultural, moral and spiritual formation and growth of children, who should always be able to see in their father and mother the first witnesses of a life directed to the pursuit of truth and the love


 "The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"
 

of God. Parents must be always free to transmit to their children, responsibly and without constraints, their heritage of faith, values and culture. The family, the first cell of human society, remains the primary training ground for harmonious relations at every level of coexistence, human, national and international. Wisdom suggests that this is the road to building a strong and fraternal social fabric, in which young people can be prepared to assume their proper responsibilities in life, in a free society, and in a spirit of understanding and peace".

Earth Defence

A fourth and special path to peace is the defence of the earth. The defence of earth has produced and continues to produce very sharp conflicts. This happens all over the world. But especially in the Middle East and above all in the Palestina. But if from the possession of the earth man goes to the common commitment to defence it, a great step toward peace is achieved.

The Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land recently endorsed a "Holy Land Declaration on Climate Change". The three members of the Council: His Beatitude Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem; Haj Salah Zuheika, Deputy Minister of the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Religious Affairs; Rabbi David Rosen, AJC International Director of

Biography

Archbishop Ignazio Sanna Archbishop of Oristano, Italy

Ignazio Sanna is an Italian Roman Catholic Archbishop and Theologian, and currently the Metropolitan Archbishop of Oristano, Chairman of the Committee for higher studies in Theology and Religious Sciences of the CEI, and is a member of the Pontifical Academy of Theology, the Committee for the Cultural Projects of the Italian Church and the Episcopal Commission of the CEI for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Proclamation and Catechesis.

Archbishop Sanna was ordained a priest on the 11th of March, 1967 in the Diocese of Nuoro.

He entered in 1968 at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, while completing his studies, obtaining the following degrees:

- *in Theology , Pontifical Lateran University , March 30th, 1970*
- *in Philosophy , University La Sapienza March 23rd, 1972*
- *in Canon Law , again at the University of the Lateran, June 21st, 1972*

Interreligious Affairs shared their faith's perspective on environmental preservation and climate change.

"We acknowledge the scientific basis of human-caused climate change and the threat it poses to human societies and the planet, as articulated by the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. We also recognize the spiritual roots of this crisis, and the importance of a religious response to it.

We call on adherents of our faiths in the Holy Land and all over the world to address this crisis by undertaking a deep reassessment of our spiritual and physical relationship to this God-given planet and how we consume, use and dispose of its blessed resources. We also call for all people of faith to reduce their personal emissions of greenhouse-gases and to urge their political leaders to adopt strong, binding, science-based targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases in order to avert the worst dangers of climate crisis.

We hope that this threat to our common home of the Holy Land and of Planet Earth will move religious adherents to overcome inter-religious strife and work together for ours and our children's common well-being" •

"The Importance of Inter-Religious Ethics"

A Lecture by H.E. Amb. Dr. Kenan Gürsoy (Ambassador of Turkey to the Holy See)

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



The topic that I will about today will be the importance of ethics in inter-religious dialogue.

As analysed by other volunteers, the elements of our civilisation is the ethical improvement of individuals as well as society, but he also says that every process, whether it is a spiritual or a material is important for civilisation - The voluntary civilisation of volunteer programs that recognize ethics as the higher of values.

In order to create the harmony between human kind and nature, between soul and culture, between conscience and history we need to have a certain ethics of the world and of life. This will enable us to build a posited world a civilisation founded not only in the achievements of science and power, but conscious of the importance of the progress of individuals and humanity from the spiritual and from the aspiritual and moral point of view.

The facts of considering the ethical aspect of the concept of civilisation, in order to improve the interior of human beings lead us to the concept of religion.

It looks like in order to form a civilisation, every spiritual concept comes from a dominant legion

of the society, because religion is on the one hand a social organization and on the other hand a way of life that invites individuals to deepen within themselves and interior life. What makes a civilisation a civilisation is mostly the heritage of beliefs and religious traditions, which open humans to understand their interior life and give them the sense and enjoyment of living.

We have to think of course that a centre ego that religious dimension of a civilisation didn't have any importance, but we have realized today that without the spiritual dimension of religion there is no soul, there is no creativity or even an extensive progress of human kind from an individual as well as from a social point of view. So we have taken consideration of that and we have taken consideration of the importance of a religious approach.

Nevertheless we can't deny that religion is a compilation of dogmas, of rules, of compromise of the believers and consists of obligation. It is an assumption of authority, an attachment to a social organizing. It is a particular institution, which includes life of believers. It is the reason why it is enclosed on itself and it is as well an established tradition. Only consider as such the religious conscious and religious dreams a risk of fulfilment of individuals and can come into an advanced frozen state of individuals. And it is an aspect that religion becomes an ideology and contributes to create conflicts instead of promoting peace in the years. The political process takes ideology and takes sense of profession.

The main question is the following: taking into account this objective side of religion and taking into account this compound of dogmas, how can we ensure this ethical progress of humans and its spiritual interior fulfilments?

According to me this is not possible by the universalisation of this point of view, which implies a contact with the other. As we cannot know each other without knowing the other, a culture cannot take conscious of its own without contacts of diverse cultures. It is the same with religions that are meant to reaffirm an ethical point of view.

But how can this encounter of different religions take place?

We have to admit first that humans are not estranged to humans and communication is always possible. Simplicity and imagination are playing important roles. Important roles are also played by individuals who can adapt to each other. Individuals are capable by nature to establish interactions between these different perspectives.

But are we sure that we are not losing each other along synchronisms, which can come from established traditions? This is the fundamental question of religions and culture. The fundamental question with religious dialogue is because we feel a lack of confidence. What happens to my values if I consider the values of the other? This fear is vain as if a real dialogue cannot take place if we are not completely sure of our faith. Only if we live our own religions, we can be faithful to our own origins; we can give a deep sense to it and establish this dialogue.

So this is when a real dialogue cannot take place if we are not really sure of our faith, if we are not truly believing in our own faith and if we really live this religion if we are faithful to our own origins we can give a deep sense to this.

As said by philosopher Paul Riqueur to sink reissuance we have to oppose communication meaning a dramatic relation where I feel myself a minority and I get dried of others imaginations once according to this other civilisation. The human truth is only in this process where civilisation will face more and more what for them, what is for them more alive, more creative.

I think that here as it's about the communication,

inter-religious communication, coming from the global aspect of the civilisation we come into now into a individual point of view or existential point of view. Because the real encounter between religions cannot take place on an inter-subjective, this is the intercommunication between believers coming or believing in different religions. It's not the religions but the believers and the religious leaders, who understand each other because they live and they take part in the same religious experience. From an ethical point of view they follow a fight with themselves, they deal with the same interior deepening, so religious universalisation and the inter-religious encounters or dialogue, is nothing else than the encounter of each other, of different believers, who will have an effect in the universe, in itself and in the others. So we say that this experience is at the same time an ethical experience.

From the point of view of the Islam, the prophecy of this religious person is a prototype, as an example is the trial to go beyond the conformism that is defined by the only feeling of having to follow some dogmas. We know that these dogmas have an important role from an external point of view. They have the role of some sort of cover that can bring us to the deepening of each other and also to the deeper sense of revelation. These external forms are only a meaning for realization and for support. We can check in the Koran this meaning of the most deepening of yourself or one. This experience is nothing but a look into achieving a real human dignity by the aspiration to be the perfect human or in other words universal humans. So we come into the research of this universality of looking into each other and this universality will also take place with the encounter of the others.

So talking still about the Islam as an example, in reality or in front of this kind of religious, there is not an essential difference between what the religions evoke, but there is an identity that is a spiritual identity, from the different ... [skipped sentence ... continues to the part that Mohammed said]

So the prophesy that Mohammed has put into his epithet the salvation and the confirmation of the others revelation that took place in the past.

So this is an example of how it starts and continues religions, this encounter with other religions. These are put on a scale of deepening interior and ethics and in the research of human dignity. It is a religious experience, pure and spiritual. It is not difficult to find examples in other religions as well.

So now to exemplify this argument, I am going to cite some verses of the Koran, which are approved for the openness of this dialogue with these other religions.

*We believe in that
which has been revealed to us
and has been revealed to you.
And your god and our god is one.
And our Muslims in submission to him
So the second verse from the Koran that I would say
is:
Say or believers
We have been living in Allah
What has been revealed to us
And what has revealed to Abraham and Israel
and Isaac and Jacob and the descendants
of what was given to Moses and Jesus
and what was given to the prophets from their Lord.
We make no distinctions between any of them
and we are Muslims in submission to him
So the verse 5; 48
the mystery of difference
To each of you we prescribed a loan and a method
Had Allah willed he could have made you a nation
united in religion
But he intended to test you in what he has given you
So brace to all that is good
To our lives we return all together*

And he will then confirm on what you used to defer.

So the importance is maybe to encounter the essential, the essential that hides behind the apparent. One behind the multiple and the same by the intermediary of the other, but we cannot destruct the multiple or apparent difference.

Every dire into religious dialogue needs an inter-religious ethic and the needs of taking counsel, ethical counsels, in the frame of religious tradition.

This inter-religious dialogue has to take place in the interior of oneself but taking into account the other in a perspective that poses me as the other and finding the other in the same sense than oneself. In other words, it is considering myself in a universal framework.

We have to fight for our own religious, the real ethical message that the religion is teaching us.

And this is not possible at the same time but by the conscience of the religious experience, in which every religion is inviting us.

It is the idea of dialogue with ourselves, in an internal discourse, which tries to conceptualize and make a philosophical systematization of our own tradition.

If we try to encounter the ethical foundations of our belief, it is its philosophy that can reveal its universal importance.

So we cannot forget on the other side that the ethical aspect is very alive to the philosophical idea of the person. And not only talking in an individual sense but also from a universal point of view.

Thank you very much ●

Biography

H.E. Amb. Dr. Kenan Gürsoy
Ambassador of Turkey to the Holy See

Professor Kenan Gürsoy is Ambassador of Turkey to the Holy See and Chairman of the Department of Philosophy. He graduated from the Department of Law at Ankara University, and he gained a four-year scholarship to the University of Rennes in France and in Paris, at the Sorbonne. Previously, he became an assistant at the Department of Arts and Philosophy at the Atatürk University. In 1999, he became Director of the University Institute of Social Sciences. Prof. Kenan Gürsoy has been involved in subjects such as Turkish Sufism, Existentialism Philosophy, Phenomenology, Ethics and Comparative Religious Ethics.

"European Culture in Globalized world"

A lecture by Rev. Olivier Reigen Wang Genh (Vice President, Buddhist Union of France)

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



First of all I want to express my profound gratitude to everybody who participates in the organization of this event. Enabling a dialogue between different cultures, different religions and above all between different human beings is something marvellous - especially today in our globalized and interconnected world. Creating opportunities like this symposium is a way of building bridges.

A multitude of invisible bridges that allow better understanding of the restrictions of preconceived ideas and prejudice, and so to better appreciate and accept other ways of thought of other believes.

I come from France, a country where the principle of secularism is enshrined in the constitution and is viewed as a basis for living together. The principle is simple: no religion or believe is officially recognized by the authorities. As a result all religions and believes are equally accepted and respected. The only condition is that they must not disturb public order and must respect French law. As a Buddhist, and I think all the Buddhist of France, are very happy with this secular constitution.

Buddhism began to grow in France in the middle if the sixties with the arrival of several masters and teachers from different traditions. One of the first

preoccupations of these masters was to try to meet the people in charge of other religions present in France, including obviously the Catholic and the Protestant Churches. In a friendly spirit many of these allowed the use of their place of worship, monasteries and temples, for the organization of the first Buddhist retreats.

When I met master Taisen Deshmaru in 1973, the celebrated Japanese Zen master, I did the first retreat with him that was organised in the famous Dominican monastery near Lyon. We practised Buddhist meditation in the monastery church and several Dominican monks took part in the retreat. The leader of the monastery had asked master Deshmaru if the presence of the statue of Christ was inappropriate. Master Deshmaru replied, beautifully saying: neither the cross, nor the statues of Buddha disturb. Only the ignorance of human beings, their anger and lack of tolerance that creates wars out of what is pure and saintly.

Buddhism very quickly won many adapts in France and a large number of native French people turned to Buddhism and made it their religion. Still, in the seventies the large waves of immigration following the terrible events in Vietnam and the war of East Asia let to several hundred thousands of people coming to France, often in quite dramatic circumstances. These communities brought with them the monks and nuns and little by little started to construct pagoda's, a place of worship. Rebuilding the way of life in a new culture. It is important to point out and pay homage to this community, who in the face of immense suffering succeeded in making a quiet and gentile integration.

Something comparable happened at the same time with the Tibetan tradition and several large Buddhist monasteries appeared in the French countryside. Each of these communities developed

separately and independently. Today there are about one million Buddhist in France and several millions sympathisers, who are people who feel close to the teachings of Buddha and frequently go to a place of Buddhist practise. We can also say there are nearly one thousand places of practise for Buddhism in France. For example in the region of Paris alone there are more than 2 or 3 thousand places to practise different Buddhist traditions.

It was not until the middle of the eighties that the need appeared to create a representative structure for all the Buddhist traditions in France. Thus the UBF, France Buddhist Union or Union Bouddhiste de France was created. Its role was to serve as a representative of the Buddhist community to the French administration and the other religions in France.

During these 40 years I have been witness and an actor of the establishment of one of humanities most ancient religion in a culture it was totally foreign to, but whose principles were not so distant. You know of course "liberty, equality and fraternity", which can very well be seen in the light of the teaching of Buddha. France' conception of democracy and Buddhism are very close.

I was very lucky during the last 40 years because as you might know Buddhism travelled a lot through the century. It travelled through many cultures and lands. It has gone from India to China, from China to south Asia and to Japan all during the 20th century.

Now Buddhism is really coming in the occident. America, South America, and all of Europe - and especially in a country like France - because of this large immigration of the seventies.

I must say that especially from the nineties a lot of work had to be done to explain Buddhism to all levels of society in France. When the tradition was not considered simply as a sect, they were at best affiliated with Asian philosophy, culture or tradition. I recall an animated debate during a meeting of non-governmental agencies at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg where it was simply impossible to get it admitted that Buddhism was one of the great religions of humanity. At best it was a philosophy, I was told.

That was at the hearth of a genuine cultural

problem. Buddhism cannot be a religion, because Buddhism is not theism. For a large majority here in Europe religion means god. It took nearly 30 years to understand that this interpretation of word "religion" was at the source of a very great confusion and a deep incomprehension. Certainly Buddhism is not theism, Buddha is not a god. There is no creator and as if that was not enough, there is no founding dogma or holy book. It is true that this does not simplify the discussion. On the other hand, anybody who has travelled to Asia knows that there are places of worship on every street corner; there is a monastery community present in daily live; there are celebrations, prayers, services, funeral ceremonies, thousand year old texts and an incredibly profound teaching. Last but not least, there are precepts, rules of life, ethics visible in the views of each individual and in their way of living together.

Thus, all the elements of what we call religion exist. Above all there is a religious presence what one might call a religious spirit. My master Taisen Deshmaru often says: "we should find the spirit of religion; the spirit of religion that precedes religion; the spirit unites us, not differentiates us; the spirit that binds us together, not separates us". That is what we can call an interreligious dialogue; a dialogue which does not stay on the surface of words and appearance, but which touches the hearths of men. It is the quality of the hearths of men that will define the quality of the dialogue.

In my tradition - the Soto Zen - we have a word to express this. In Japanese it is [Dodji]. It signifies that we are not alone, that we cannot consider ourselves alone, autonomous and independent. He is him, I am me. This is totally false and illusory, because the reality does not exist. "Dogen" is the unity of all beings and is an agreed law of interdependence. I move, everything moves. It is in this reality that today is becoming more and more visible in this globalized world, in this village as I like to call it, that the dialogue made up of symbolic important moments and events like this one. But it also exists of an infinity of invisibly small and insignificant ones. That is that this dialogue opens the hearts of men.

Thank you for your presence and attention.

Biography

Rev. Olivier Reigen Wang Genh
Vice President, Buddhist Union of France

Olivier Reigen Wang-Genh has been practicing Sôtô Zen since 1973. He was ordained a monk by Master Taisen Deshimaru in March 1977. He practiced for nine years in the Strasburg dojo and was very active in its development and, in 1986, he became head of the dojo.

In 1987, with the help of German practitioners, he started to set up dojos in the main towns of Baden-Wurtemberg and Alsace. The Strasburg dojo thus became a regional Zen centre.

He started ordaining monks and nuns in 1992 and a sangha (community) developed naturally, with several hundred lay and ordained members. Then, in April 1999, with the help of the regional sangha, he founded the Kosan Ryumon-Ji temple at Weiterswiller in Alsace. Around fifteen monks and nuns decided to join him to practice the monastic way of life, following the traditional rules of a Sôtô Zen monastery.

Olivier Reigen Wang-Genh received a Dharma transmission in 2001 from Master Dosho Saikawa, the current head of Sôtô Zen in South America.

In June 2007, he became president of the Buddhist Union of France, a federation that brings together Buddhist schools in France. He is also Vice-President of the International Zen Association.

He thus continues the development of Buddhism and Sôtô Zen in particular, in France and Europe.

"Interfaith Dialogue in the Mediterranean Basin"

A Lecture by His Eminence Metropolitan Stephanos of Tallinn, Primate of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



Before starting my speech, my dear friends, I would like to thank the organizers of this conference for the honour they gave me, to join this meeting and participate in this exchange of ideas. I hope I will fulfil your expectations and I am already grateful for your kindness in listening to my speech, today.

It was not by chance that I chose to focus my lecture on the interreligious dialogue in the Mediterranean Basin. It is not in my intentions to draw political or geopolitical consideration. However, taking into consideration the current events, I want to underline that the main task for all the religious leaders of this area is inviting people from the Mediterranean to freely and voluntarily build the peace and to rediscover the principles and the values, which have been flourishing in this region during many centuries. These principles, in fact, are traditionally part of the three monotheistic religions born in the area: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

It is necessary to remember the importance of these values, which are the faith in only one God; the sacrality of the human beings; the love capable to cross all the borders and discriminations through compassion, forgiveness and justice; the peace. It is, in fact, true that during the Medieval Age, a

relatively unified Mediterranean culture had been established, having used basis common to the Greek Logos and the Biblical Exegesis.

It is also well known that the Mediterranean man is attached more to the language of friendship than of dominations, and he is closer to the pursuing of simple things than of industrial products. For the Mediterranean man, human beings are born for entertain relations, they live in communion with other people and the living God. The Mediterranean lives with intensity, as the Greek poet Sikelianos said: "...as much as the skin of the beef on the tambourine".

Therefore, this sea risks to die because of its physical and moral pollution, the incapacity to equilibrate its northern side, where people can still eat and satisfy their hunger, and the southern side, which is too much populated and too little developed, and which witnesses increasing fanatisms and exploitations.

In order to create a pacific equilibrium between these two sides, a sort of equilibrium that a large number of people considers utopic, it is necessary to create a drawing animated not only by political and cultural representatives, but also, now more than never, by the religious leaders of the Mediterranean. The main intent would be to establish again an antique and active collaboration for the surviving of this sea, which since the ancient times seems to sum up the history of the world.

A history that, like in the Middle East as well as in Africa, pushes Christian and Muslim populations to leave their ancestral orders. The absence of peace and stability and terrorism are all signs of the absence of value, such as peace, solidarity and justice. The sacrality and integrity of the person are depreciated when we are not able anymore to see the face of God in the youngest of our brothers or when we


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remain indifferent at their poverty, sufferings, and at the violence that torment humanity.

I am thinking now about two quotes: one is of the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras "with Islam we coexist since more than 1300 years, contacts are incontestable but are difficult to precise. On the intellectual level they had less interest even though there were real organized, mainly at the end of the Byzantine times. Each one wanted to convince the other one, or rather to win against him, without trying to understand him really. The other one is from the actual Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: "If the oriental Europe has to, somehow, acquire the knowledge of laicity, the occidental has to refind his orient".

To reorient the self, I mean, to retrieve the fundamental sense of human relations is a necessary condition to build unity of people and nations, the only way to realize the unity of the countries that are on the other side of the Mediterranean and, I add, not only of the Mediterranean. It is in fact impossible to fight only an economic problem, or a social one or a political one. It is necessary to equally consider them in respect of their moral and religious values, in order not to reach a confrontation, but the convergence.

Making the point on the current state of the dialogue among the Orthodox Church, Islam and Judaism in Orient, I would likely say that even though the intellectual dialogue has not reached the hoped stage yet, there is another kind of real dialogue, made by conviviality. It testifies that the Christian message passes through other channels, so that we can talk of a sort of pre-dialogue, characterized by the expression of each part's beliefs and the understanding of them. This means that we will also establish a mutual intelligence of doctrines.

I think we surely should take this more responsible opportunity of pre-dialogue, in order to estrange the modern man from his rationality, the sadness of his often-unilateral stances and to remember him that a human being is not only made of words and reasoning, of thought and freedom of thought. The human being is firstly a mystery, a mystery

that is script and conscript on a face, which cannot live among the others, unless there would be the communion of love that brings to the communion of the humanity. In other words, I am speaking about the encounter with the other for the division of a common work, with the purpose to make religion a factor of development and social peace. It also should exclude all the forms of fear, which have nothing in common with love, and include all the forms of love, which have nothing in common with fear. It is with this last intent that our interreligious dialogue will be credible and authentic.

After all, no one asked us to abandon our own identities, but to share them on the cultural and political plan, when it is necessary. In order to do so, we should change our mentalities to make others understand more that God is the freedom of the man, he is loveliness that spreads among us, especially in these difficult times for the people, men and women of the Mediterranean.

All the religions through history, the relation with the other, and evolution, have to be perfectly aware of the fact that world peace depends of the peace among religions. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid all the religions' instrumentalizations for political purposes. The affirmation of an own identity necessarily implies to promote a logic of convergence and to exit from the confrontation's path. In other words, the intent is to substitute the will for domination with the will for peace, which will nurture, develop and consolidate the common dialogue.

Contacts and dialogue among Jews, Muslims and Christian-Orthodox in Middle East have been existing for decades. They still exist, but they are difficult to quantify. From history, we know, for example, that Muslims collaborated with Christians and together they realized great developments. For example, all the works of Greek philosophy and science have been translated in Arabic, frequently by Monophysite Christians. I can also add that spiritual relations among them are deeper than it seems. It is true, in fact, that men of faith have different ways to communicate than the trans-visible, and it is more in the daily and common life that a cultural


 "The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"

penetration is taking place.

It is not in my intentions to develop now a discussion on the theology about Islam and Judaism. However, the question that interests us is how it is going to develop the Islam in the next century. The Koran, which is considered the word of God, cannot be submitted to historical exegesis, while the work of numerous associations, in which Christians and moderate Muslims collaborate, is addressing to modernize the interpretation of the law. It is in fact necessary that the Koran, divine dictation and historical-critic testimony, would not become an obstacle for the implementation of the dialogue with Islam.

I want also add that Islamic faith is always living in Islam and Muslims' hearts. It is more linked to the public sphere. It is a source of religious and spiritual life, of humanity, creativity and divinity. The religion of the great majority of Arabs is the one of the elements of God's drawing that is part of the Christian vision of the world. If you understand this point, you can also erase from your mind the question of when these two religions, Islam and Christianity, will meet.

With the Judaism, the proximity with the Christianity is the Bible, even though we don't read it in the same way, and the making of questions, such as the Messiahship of Christ, the revelation of God's Trinity, of one and triune God. For this reason, we need to respect Judaism in its specificity, as it is developed, and to understand that the ancient Israel has not been replaced for the profits of the Church, but it remains alive in the history, thanks to the works of its intellectuals and spiritual teachers. We need to keep in mind that Jerusalem is central in all the Abrahamic religions; the land of Israel has been built following the drawing of God and become central in the effort of transfiguration of a Christianity that gives all its importance to the Holy Spirit. We have to pray, as the Patriarch Athenagoras says, to make out of Jerusalem a place of encounter and peace, to prepare together the return of Jesus, martyr of

Islam, Messiah of Israel and our God.

At this point, it is evident that all the theological dialogue among equal parts, whether they are Jewish or Muslim brothers, cannot have as its goal the conversion of one to the other. We need to look for concessions and compromises, which are able to enhance the integrity and the individuality of each of these religions in a situation of dialogue.

I hope that despite of the brevity of my speech, I have been able to clarify you the next steps of the interreligious dialogue in this region of the world, which is the Mediterranean. Not mentioning the importance for the Orthodoxy to consider all this in a new perspective, which is based on the scriptures but also on the Fathers of the Church, that could bring us together, despite our diversities.

Evidently, my thinking is particularly concerned the Patriarchs Orthodox of the Middle East and Africa, which are in direct relation with Judaism and Islam. It is also focused on the governance of the pluralist societies with which the Orthodox Church has a long history of companionship.

It is evident that the Gospel calls all the Christians to fight against the fixism, superficiality, social injustice. In particular, as commitment of the Arab world, it is necessary to establish a new relation between religion and politics, which will be a factor of development and not of regression, and of coexistence among Christians, Arabs and Jews, where Jews and Arabs live together. Therefore, it is also necessary to sustain the dignity of the person.

In conclusion, in order to encourage the Christians of the East to put an end to the progressive territorialisation of their own regions and societies and to enforce the logic of community, in order to defend, together with their Jewish and Islamic compatriots, a space of freedom, equality and fraternity of the human being.

As the Apostol Paul said, God invited all of us to live together and to act with intelligence and justice.

Thank you •

Biography

by His Eminence Metropolitan Stephanos of Tallinn
Primate of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church

Metropolitan Stephanos of Tallinn and All Estonia (born 29 April 1940) is the current primate (elected in 1999) of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church.

Metropolitan Stephanos was born Christakis Charalambides in Bukavu, Belgian Congo (now DR Congo).[1] His parents were of Cypriot ancestry.

The future metropolitan undertook a year of study towards a medical degree at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium, but elected in 1960 to switch to divinity studies. He transferred to the St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris, simultaneously pursuing studies at the University of Paris. He was awarded the degree of Master of Theology from St. Sergius and the degree of lector from the University.

Charalambides was ordained to the diaconate on 6 January 1963 and to the priesthood on 17 November 1968 for service in the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of France. He was appointed in 1972 as protosyngellos (i.e., episcopal vicar) for the southern region of France, with his base in Nice. Fr. Stephanos was consecrated on 25 March 1987 to the episcopacy with the titular title of Bishop of Nazianzus. While continuing his previous responsibilities, he took on new assignments: secretary of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops of France, lector at St. Sergius, and professor of patrology at the Roman Catholic seminary of Nice.

In 1996, the Ecumenical Patriarchate restored the Estonian Orthodox Church as an autonomous entity under its protection, following the independence of Estonia from the Soviet Union. A General Assembly of the church elected Bishop Stephanos as Metropolitan of Tallinn and All Estonia.[2] The new metropolitan was installed on 21 March 1999.

"The Promotion of World Peace through Christian/Muslim Dialogue in Jordan"

A Lecture by The H.E Maroun Laham (Patriarchal Vicar for Jordan of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem)

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



The topic is peace through christian/muslim dialogue.

There are two crucial words: peace and dialogue. The question is: what is the connection between the two words? Does the dialogue, especially the inter religious, and in particular the dialogue between the christians and muslims, lead to peace, or is peace the indispensable condition to have a truthful, conceivable and effective dialogue? This is the question.

Usually, philosophers would start their research with something called "definition of terms", explanatio terminorum. For this reason, I would like to introduce the definition of the word "peace" and the definition of the word "dialogue".

Peace. I do not think that today there is a word that is repeated more frequently by human beings like the word peace. Due to existing world crisis and wars, there is first a very simple definition of peace, second a more comprehensive one, and third a full definition of peace. The simple definition states that peace is the absence of war. This definition is incomplete, for absence of war does not actually mean peace, for

cold war is more devastating and consuming than the effective war. A more comprehensive definition is that peace means the prevalence of justice, namely to give every person his right, unicuique suum, we say in latin. This definition is very true, as there could be no peace without the prevalence of equal rights and justice first, without returning what these persons as individuals and these communities of countries have been robbed and deprived of. This definition is also lacking, and I think that a full definition of peace is: no peace without justice, and no peace without reconciliation and forgiveness. I mention this because there are peace Treaties among individuals and among countries, but they remain as they are: cold peace Treaties, signed between heads of States in order to stop the war, but people of these countries have not reconciled, nor forgiven, nor are willing to accept each other. The peace Treaties between Israel and Egypt and between Israel and Jordan for example, politically seem correct and applied on the ground, but the Egyptian people and the people of Jordan did not reconcile with the Israeli people. Here, we find the first connection between peace and inter religious dialogue, for to reconcile, to forget the past and to admit one's fault are true religious principles and ethics. Thus, the comparison between peace and reconciliation that happened between european countries, namely between France and Germany after World War II, come to mind, for those countries who have signed the peace treaties worked at the same time on reconciling the people, in particular the young who hold the future in their hands, a reconciliation that led to the start of the European Union. There is finally no peace without justice, no true peace without reconciliation and forgiveness.

Then I come to the term dialogue. The dialogue,

in particular inter religious dialogue and especially between christians and muslims, is a word frequently used in today's society. The dialogue differs, whether it is political, economical, social or religious. Our topic today is the religious dialogue.

Pope Francis wrote a small chapter in his last encyclical, *Evangelii Gaudium*, on the dialogue, of which I would like to mention its most important sayings. One: to respect the other is important, and the dialogue it is not a dispute in an attempt to convince the other. It is necessary to know that the other has something more than I have. The dialogue sets a certain dilemma, that says that we should get out of our inner selves, and our convictions of possessing the absolute truth, to accept the other and by admitting that we need the other's truth. To accept this struggle and embrace it, not from a political or strategical perspective of view, but for the seeking of the truth. Second, dialogue means that we know that others have something good, not only something different. He has something good to tell us. Nevertheless dialogue does not mean giving up on personal ideas or faith or traditions, but it means to give up on the idea that our thoughts and our traditions are sole and absolute. Third, when there is a problem and after the storm had passed, we must speed up an immediate dialogue. It is important to initiate the dialogue as soon as possible. Time builds barriers, and when the barriers grow, the dialogue becomes difficult, and the reconciliation more difficult. Barriers between humans promote hatred and grudges. Fourth, in dialogue, as in all things, haze is from the devil. We need passions, if we want to understand who's different from us and who might enriches us with the good that there is within him. Man expresses himself freely and honestly not when he feels tolerated, but rather when he encounters acceptance and love. The issue is not to wish others to become like me, but rather that I become like them. Not to allow others to enter my world, but rather that I enter their world.

And now we come to talk about the dialogue between christians and muslims. The speak about the muslim/christian dialogue I personally experienced, particularly in Jordan and in the Middle

East in general, is a dialogue between christians and muslim believers who belong to the same people, ethnicity, language, culture and traditions, social and even psychological reactions. First: the dialogue of life, the dialogue of coexistence. Coexistence in the school, university, work and social relations. Is a dialogue generally lived and exist of course with some short comings, this is normal in the human world. However, this coexistence stops when there are mixed religious merges. This is due to a sense of religious sensitivity, for christians and muslims alike. Due to the social systems and traditions, and sometimes due to convictions related to religious beliefs. Second, there is the formal and academic dialogue, the dialogue of intellectuals, officials, institutes and conferences. It is also a dialogue that is frequently used, it focuses mostly on the exchange of ideas, on general topics of interest to the christian and muslim equally, and muslim equally. Justice, freedom, peace, child's right, women's right, upbringing of the new generation and acceptance of other. The formal and academic dialogue really touches subjects related to the christian and muslims beliefs, as the religious issues are highly sensitive on both sides.

There is also the spiritual dialogue. This maybe the most beautiful form of dialogue, because it touches the absolute spiritual relationship between the christians, muslims faithful and his God. You can say that the latter is the most beautiful of all, because it is free from the historical residues, and free from the religious sensitivities and social castes. As whenever the human being rises, the barriers and walls fall down.

The question now is: how can peace be achieved through islamic/christian dialogue? We said that peace includes ethical values, such as reconciliation, admittance of sin and the acceptance of forgiveness. There is no doubt that there are secular and moral values independent from religion, but fundamental moral values are of clear religious origin. It is true that separating religion from politics is important, but this separation does not mean the lack of cooperation for the common good. In particular, the cooperation between the two most widespread

religions in the world, christianity and islam, to spread peace between individuals, communities and countries.

One of the things that the religious dialogue aim to resolve is what Pope John Paul II mentioned in his letter "*Sollicitudo rei socialis*", social concern, in 1987. On the structural sin, and its impediment on promoting peace, it is the responsibility of one person as such, but political groups and multinational societies as well. These are structural sins, like colonialism, slavery, exploitation of children and plundering of wealth of the poor countries. The debate states that what God had created is for all human beings, and that the common good is more important than personal gain. Sharing and solidarity is more important than production. If matters reversed, the world would continue contrarily to what God the creator had planned for the human kind, and as a result peace will not be spread among individuals on one hand and among communities and countries on the other.

Another matter of islamic christian dialogue focuses on is the human dignity and placing it above any other consideration. In christianity, God created man in his image and likeness and gave him dominion over the earth and all within it, and in islam man is the vice regent of God on earth. In both religions, man's dignity is a right from God, the creator, and denying him his right is a violation in itself against God's dignity and God's image. What prevents true peace, is the fact that reality works against what religious dialogue calls for. The reality is that there is the poor and the rich, there is the powerful and the weak, there is ruler and the ruled. The reality is there is a division created by men between the good and the evil, between decision makers and executors. The reality is that there is a first, a second, a third and a tenth world. The situation in the Middle East during the past three years is a witness to what I have mentioned. Inter religious dialogue contributes to the prevalence of peace, though its continued goal to respect the human dignity and to considerate it

a top priority.

Starting with the fundamental equality among all human beings, religious dialogue also contributes to the prevalence of peace through its calling for a life of harmony among all nations of today's society. Since today's society is multiple in religion, culture, language and history, peace cannot prevail unless all humanity's components are given their right to contribute to the life of the community and its development, so that they might feel that they are a fundamental element and not just marginalized intruders. In this way, we can stop the problem of refugees, migrants and immigrants, who go to live in countries other than their own for the purpose of work. In this way we can overcome the mentality of the frightened minority and those seeking protection from outside. In this way, we can overcome the mentality of the majority, who allow themselves to step over the rights of the minority. Only then, it can be for all components of the community to live a life of peace and harmony.

Conclusion. It would be argued that religions should work on the prevalence of peace among its faithful before giving advice to achieve among other nations and communities. This is true, as the theological differences between religions and divisions within religion itself, reduce the influential degree of the religious ethics. However we should not exaggerate in this matter and we should not give it more than its worth. The ethical values, which we have spoken of, and the general spiritual values are common among all religions, especially peace, which is the subject of this conference. There is no christian peace, muslim peace, jewish peace or buddist peace. All religions call for peace between man and his creator, and between man and himself. Peace between man and his brother is only a reflection of internal peace, that brings together the creation with his creator, and it is a sign of internal harmony which is a sign of inner peace for the man himself.

Thank you very much.

Biography

The H.E Maroun Laham
Patriarchal Vicar for Jordan of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

On the 24th of June, 1972, His Excellency Archbishop Maroun Lahham was ordained a Catholic priest in Jerusalem. He later became Fidei donum in Dubai and a vicar and priest in Jordan.

In 1992, he received his PhD in pastoral theology and catechesis in the Pontifical Lateran University. In 1994, he was promoted to the presidency of the Latin Seminary in Beit Jala.

On 8 September 2005 Lahham was appointed Bishop of Tunis by Pope Benedict XVI, and was officially ordained on the 2nd of October of the same year in the parish church of Beit Jala by Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah.

On the 22nd of May, 2010 Pope Benedict XVI raised the Diocese of Tunis to Archdiocese, and gave His Excellency Maroun Lahham the title of Archbishop of Tunis.

Less than two years later, on the 19th of January, 2012 Lahham was recalled to Middle East where he became Auxiliary Bishop and vicar of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem for Jordan. He received the title of Titular Bishop of Medeba and maintains, as an individual, the title of archbishop.

"The Future has the Flavor of the Past"

A Lecture by Senator Mihai Razvan Ungureanu (Member of Romanian Senate, Former Prime Minister of Romania)

Rome; April 2nd, 2014



Dear hosts, dear guests, ladies and gentleman,

The title of my lecture for today is not taken out of the hat. It reads from a poem –written by Yates – the famous poet Yates and that very verse says in my opinion a lot about the tension between the past and the future. The verse reads like this: ‘The future has the flavor of the past’ which means that whenever we look into the future, something from our past comes to the fall and takes us into the days following our present with that very tinge of past that makes us understanding what is happening and what will happen. This very verse stays at the top of a book written by a famous cultural critique who delved himself into cultural diplomacy and cultural dialogue for almost three decades. His name, since he passed away some years ago, his name is Tony Judt. He was a distinguished professor at the New York University and a founder of the so called Remarque group, whose member I was for almost 5 years. This group assembled young individuals from all over the world, from Europe, from North America, from Africa, from Asia into a bunch of thinkers worth 20, 25 people, who were on a nearly basis taken into seclusion for 2 weeks with no other meal than physical meal and no other things to do

but to interpret the world. And what was at the end of those couple of weeks, of dialogue between ourselves and in the midst of closed walls, it was the report which was then filed to the University of New York and to other capitals of the world.

Tony Judt wrote several books which are of most importance for me today since I need to recall them to your attention. In one of them whose title is ‘Thinking the Twentieth Century’, Tony Chad tries to rewind the meanings of the century that passed - making a difference between European history and European memory. History and memory are two ways of containing our past. Memory is what we keep in mind; history is what we interpret in the most logical and profoundly rational way. And the author says the following: ‘Replacing history with memory is dangerous’. He plays on behalf of history. History should be taught in such a way that there should be an ethical meaning at the end of it, while memory itself is ready to lead us into deception. We have different kinds of memories, mostly individual or group memories, whereas history is usually only one - May it be a legal, may it be illicit history, may it be a state history or maybe an academic history.

While memory is based on impressions, on subjectivism, history tries to reach objectivity. One of his points deals with the narratives of national suffering throughout the 20th century. And he thinks that confessions, religions of all kinds have become causes of sufferance throughout the 20th century simply because they were ready to offer very consistent narratives of suffering. Without history Tony Chad says memory is open to abuse. Without a structured lecture of confessions and religions, memory is open to abuse. This very phrase of Tony Chad, hides in its midst a very interesting phenomenon. How much of the 20th century destruction, wars, profound fractures,

pains, wounds, have been caused by religion, have been caused by the wrong interpretation of the word god. And Tony Chad explains the First World War, the Second World War in the following terms: 'the world has become deaf to the word of peace. For as long as the word of peace has been assigned to the word of god in the 21st century because its profound rationality has taken itself away from the ethical meaning of religion thus putting his own soul into the hands of destruction' this situation is treated by history and by historians in a very rational way, whereas memories treat the situation in a very emotional way. Historiography, addressing the First or Second World War is filled with numbers, with figures, with proven facts and relevant details, whereas the memories referring to the First and the Second World War are explaining the human causes of destruction and death. In none of those phenomena is or should be, whereas it does not exist, a reference to religion. Some very few years ago one distinguished historian from the University of London, his name is Norman Davies, tried to see whether there is an ethos of European nations who would allow European nations to start war between themselves, not respecting religion per say. And his conclusion was the following: in none of the most important congregations of the 20th century was there any word addressing religion. None that is nor in the rhetoric's of the leaders of the time, nor in the rhetoric's of the principal military leaders of the time and no word about god and therefore about ethical peace in the conclusions of the diplomatic treaties following the wars, may they be in Versailles or in Potsdam.

This elimination of religion from any reference addressing the 20th century, the century of

destruction, makes again Tony Judt and I quote him now right in his book of Postwar in a book called 'Postwar: A history of Europe since 1945' and he writes the following 'Europe might be united but European history and soul remain deeply asymmetrical - asymmetrical not in reference to the West or the East but asymmetrical in reference to religion. Whereas all Europeans want to be together, the European history and mostly the 20th century European history, divorcing from religion, remains deeply asymmetrical. What are those historians calling for? – Both Tony Chad and Norman Davies? Accepting what Christian faith usually teaches us to do – that is responsibility of what Europe went through in the past century. We can then infer further on that if anyone one becomes, or wishes to become a European, then should accept himself as responsible for Europe's history as a whole. This mingled between history, memory and the absence of religion throughout the 20th century gives us an incentive to ask the following question: is there any reason to think that the 21st century should have a different chance in terms of its connection with religion? We all think that it should, but could it be? How much of our popular politics are linked with the basic principle of faith? – May they come from Christianity, may they come from other books addressing the word of god - Basically in this world none yet. So if the future has the flavor of the past this is not good news. The past is the 20th century and the future is the 21st. And if Yates can be contradicted then certainly something should be done.

These were my few words addressing the distinguished audience.

Biography

Senator Mihai Razvan Ungureanu

Member of Romanian Senate, Former Prime Minister of Romania

Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu (born September 22, 1968) is a Romanian historian, politician and former Prime Minister of Romania. He was the foreign minister of Romania from December 28th, 2004 to March 12th, 2007, and he was appointed as Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service later in 2007. Following the resignation of the Emil Boc government he was appointed Prime Minister serving through April 2012.

Mr. Ungureanu studied Math and Physics at the Costache Negruzzi high-school in Iași (Romania) where he graduated as valedictorian in 1987. Mr. Ungureanu later studied History and Philosophy at the University of Iași where he graduated in 1992. From 1985 to 1989, Mr. Ungureanu was an alternate member of the Union of Communist Youth Central Committee, while between 1990 and 1992 he was a member of the university senate as a student representative. In 1993, Mr. Ungureanu obtained a master's degree at the Oxford Center for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, an affiliated program of St Cross College at the University of Oxford (UK). In March 2004 he received a Ph.D. degree from the University of Iași.

Mr. Ungureanu was a Professor at the University of Iași when he was recruited for diplomatic service in 1998. He subsequently served as State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1998–2000), and was a Vienna-based representative of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (2000–2004).

On November 27th, 2007, he was nominated to head the Foreign Intelligence Service (SIE). He took his new position on December 5th of the same year.

On February 6th, 2012, Mr. Ungureanu was given a mandate by President Traian Băsescu to form a new government. As Prime Minister, Ungureanu had become the Democratic Liberal Party's probable candidate for the presidency when Băsescu's term expired in 2014.

"Why Unity?"

A Lecture by Anna Prior and Dr. Shamender Talwar, Founders of The Unity of Faiths Foundation

Rome; April 3rd, 2014



Anna Prior

A warm-hearted thank you to Mark and Elvira – we are honoured to support the ICD and its valuable work, we are deeply grateful for being here, thank you so much.

The Unity of Faiths Foundation is a secular, non-profit, charitable foundation, whose aim is to further the enhancement of community relations, both in terms of religion per se and community cohesion in general. We would like to show you a film clip... (Film)

Ladies and Gentleman,

This is why we need unity. Now we have a short clip on what the youth of the UK are saying about unity... (Film)

Are youth our future? How do we inspire our youth through the lens of this dysfunctional world we have delivered them? The Unity of Faiths is trying to build stringer communities to nurture our young. We are committed to giving our communities the tools and resources that will help them live side by side, to help them be empowered.

An example of building a stronger community:

we built a lasting relationship with the Hindu communities in one part of London. We offered them, through dialog, the tools and confidence to link up with the local Mosque, so that the two communities could get along better, reducing the tensions between them – significant tensions, I might add. Today the mosque has developed a youth centre for young people of all faiths, so they can connect with each other and build lasting friendships.

Another remarkable story is where the Unity of Faiths Foundation gave a troubled young Somali gang member the opportunity to perform on stage at a Unity of Faiths festival, where over twenty thousand people attended. This transformed gang member has swapped his gun for the microphone, and the good news is that he's been signed up by a major record label.

In another example, we asked school children from west London schools who they would like to link up with to learn more about dialogue. At the times, *Slumdog Millionaire*, Oscar-winning film, was still in the news as the big Hollywood blockbuster. We live-linked the author of *Slumdog Millionaire*, Vikas Swarup, Consul General to Japan for India, to talk to the children and discuss their ideas on unity on a huge screen in front of a large audience. It was a great moment, especially empowering them. The young students were so inspired that this has now led to further plans to develop a Citizen's Charter.

Our young people face a dreadful outlook in this unstable economic climate, with increasing social deprivation. We've all enhanced the ties for years, many years. We must inspire our children, commit to giving them a better world before it's too late. We must all own our responsibility and become accountable, compassionate, caring human beings, where mankind finally evolves into kind man, and

women, of course. Where compassion is activated in people by donating education to all, ensuring service to mankind is part of their education. Service to mankind is the very rent we pay for being human. The education of every child, particularly those less fortunate, is essential. For the poor child gives back the greatest, the most to his or her community, to their nation, building a better world. Caring and respecting the elderly must not be forgotten, children must be educated to that, building a community where everyone has respect and faith in each other, a community template that cares for every person in it. Leading, by example, positive action, encouraging the "haves" to earn up to their responsibility and eventually hold accountable to support caringly the "have-nots".

This is Unity of Faiths, we welcome you all. Thank you.

Dr. Shamender Talwar

Anna explained of how Unity of Faith works, but there was a journey that took place first, and that journey was: how do we begin? What happened? What inspired us?

And the inspiration was Anna and I were sitting in India and we thought, there are many seminars, many conferences, many workshops... But is there anything that we can do to bring unity but involving the public, the people out there, the ones who count?

So we thought: Why don't we do a festival, do it in London, find a troubled area in London, where communities are not getting on with each other? So we chose a place in London, we got the communities together, and in one month we put a festival together called "The Unity of Faiths Festival", which was attended by eight thousand people from all works of life, where all the religious leaders got together, doctors, teachers, students, lawyers, social workers, nurses, children, coming together, helping their community and building that alliance of supporting

their community.

The Festival was done and it was a major success... But now what? The festival is done, what is the repercussion, what are the after effects of this festival? As everybody knows, London had one of the worst riots, it took place in August 2011, our festival took place in June 2011, six weeks earlier. Southall, where we put the first festival, was known to be top-five to be affected by the riots. But the wonderful thing is Southall was not affected. The Sikhs were protecting the mosques, the Hindus were protecting the churches, the Christians were protecting the Hindu temples. The very next day, our Prime Minister came on question time and said "I commend the people of Southall for coming together". And the most remarkable thing was, the very next day the local council came back to us and told us: "Guys, what you did that day, do it again."

Now I am myself a doctor and Anna is an art dealer, we have no experience, we are just two normal human beings that got together and said, let's bring the people together. But we did so. So what was a very small local event in 2011 became a big London, UK-event in 2012 when we got the support of Her Majesty the Queen and most recently President Obama.

The main thing is that unity works, among all of us, nobody owns unity, and everybody is a part of unity. This is a journey that we all have to be part of, if not today, then tomorrow: a journey of unity, a journey of having faith in each other.

Thank you.

We'd like to welcome questions on how we all can work together in bringing unity amongst everywhere: my town, your town, your friend's town, a different country... Let's all just brainstorm together and find a solution, because it's for our children, it's for the benefit of our children.

Thank you •

Biography

Anna Prior and Dr. Shamender Talwar
Founders of The Unity of Faiths Foundation

Ms. Anna Prior, a former Mayfair art dealer, and Dr. Shamender Talwar, a Social Psychologist from West London, founded The Unity of Faiths to encourage respect and understanding between one another; to cultivate care in the community; and to help dispel fear, anger, discrimination and isolation. They were joined after a year by Mr Gurmail Malhi, a successful entrepreneur from Southall.

Speaking on the drive behind TUFF, the Founders comment: "Ambitious, you may well say, but we believe through setting up initiatives at a community and grass-root level, we can build up a wave of support and action to the concept of having Faith in each other, the ripples of which can be felt beyond the national and global framework."

"Model of arranging relations between the State and religious communities and fostering interfaith and intrasocial dialogue in order to promote peace and stability."

A lecture by Mufti Dr. Aziz ef. Hasanović, President of Meshihat of Islamic Community in Croatia

Rome; April 3rd, 2014



Dear participants, honoured members of the organization team, respected lecturers,

Please allow me to greet you and express my esteem to the organisation board as well as to the participants of this valuable event that takes place here in Rome, the city we can undoubtedly mark as the city of cultural diversity, coexistence and interfaith dialogue. I'm speaking here, today, not only as the representative of the Islamic Community in Croatia, but also as the person that was born, grown up and educated in a multi-cultural and multi-national ambience. Therefore I strongly support your activities since they are for the well-being of the mankind and as such in complete harmony with the postulates of Islam.

Islam itself encourages Muslims for the cooperation and dialogue with all people regardless of their religious or any other origin, since cooperation and dialogue are recognized as the basis for learning about others and development of mutual understanding in order to exchange goods between people. Pluralism, as such, is natural and also a

lifelong necessity since people are differentiated by language, race, culture, faith, habits. This makes pluralism, in fact, universal postulate and therefore makes differences among people regarding their opinions and religion objective reality.

This has been mentioned in the words of Allah who said (Qur'an 5/48):

„To each of you We prescribed a law and a method. Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion], but [He intended] to test you in what He has given you; so race to [all that is] good. To Allah is your return all together and He will [then] inform you concerning that over which you used to differ?"

Besides pluralism, which is explicitly mentioned, in Qur'anic verses we find that mankind has common origin and also strongly uphold of the human rights and human values protection for everyone: „O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women..." (Qur'an 4/1). In Qur'an we can also find strong condemnation of the racism, national-chauvinism, emphasizing any differences but those based on sanctity and charity. The messenger Mohammed s.a.v.s. said: "People, your God is one and only, and also your predecessor is common. Neither Arab has the advantage over those who are not Arabians, nor non-Arabian have the advantage over Arab. Also neither has the black people advantage over redskin people, nor do redskin people have the advantage over black people except in sanctity and charity."

Since a person does not live as an isolated individual, especially in modern society, than correlations

between people, with all peculiarities present, will become of great benefit for the individuals as well for societies in decreasing antagonism between people.

So, cooperation and peaceful coexistence between the followers of the Book and all the others does not mean dialogue about doctrinal questions on which they cannot find consensus or deflection from the principles of faith for the artificial peace and consensus, rather it means dialogue about what is beneficial for the person like protection of his rights, preservation of human dignity, elimination of violence, elimination of terror, suppression of hostilities, solving the problems that people face with and creating environment for the life every person deserve. All these, mentioned above, are the postulates of the Heaven revelations which are accepted and incorporated in positive legislation, and also in accordance with the human rights declarations.

1. The necessity of creating the environment for dialogue

Before, the interfaith dialogue has been limited on the discussions about rational-metaphysics matters. Through time it evolved on discussions about existential-cultural matters. In other words, besides metaphysical and doctrinal reasons, demand for the interfaith dialogue starts to achieve its serious cultural and civilization justification. In the last few decades, the West, recognized as metaphysical and religious fact, passes through serious changes. Modern human is facing with the situations which are radically different from the previous ones and which cannot be denied by anyone who is seriously dealing with the religious phenomenon. Today, in west-European countries lives several millions of Muslims and meanwhile in arabian-islamic countries lives huge number of Christians of different denominations. Without any inhibition we can say that the trip from one religious universe to another is a new experience that modern human faces with today. As it has been noticed by Saeed H. Nasr that is not a journey on which someone discovers new continents or even planets but it is a journey on which someone discovers many religious

worlds or even universes. Today, modern human is confronted with several realities or phenomena of religious characters that belong to diverse spiritual and religious traditions which religious and spiritual nature is not possible to deny, except if it is denied the existence of religious phenomena in general. The changes in modern world, cultural and civilization ones, will condition the changes within theology in religions. For example, we can mention theological reform of Abduhu and also the 2nd Council and liberal theology that affected Muslims and Christians respectively.

Even though Abduhu's reform was caused by the religious program revindication of western colonialism, in its essence reform will establish the positive attitude towards other religions. Such improvement is evident in the documents derived from the 2nd Vatican Council, mainly through transition from theology of truth (which interpretation was exclusive right of the Church) to theology of the human with different beliefs (Nostra Aetate) what will allow the broadest possible communication within ecumenical world and what is perceived as Council's biggest contribution to development of dialogue. The consequences of this phenomenon reflected also on our region. In the beginning of 1970's the, so called, ecumenical theology will start to develop dialogue in a way that was not imaginable before. These processes have lead number of exceptional theologians who've had broad understanding for peculiarities and, so to say, theological culture. Their teachings contributed to the removal of prejudices what created major U-turn towards better understanding and contacts between Muslims and Christians. The dialogue became to mean not only speaking to but also listening to the others, what created space for appreciation of others and understanding of their peculiarities and tradition.

The result of such approach is that the faculties of theology in Zagreb and Sarajevo will start to teach about Islam and Christianity through independent seminars, and not within history of religions what was the case before. Even though these were pioneer attempts, they have massively impacted

the idea of ecumenism and dialogue in this area (Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina).

2. Towards fearless dialogue

After we had reconsidered the necessity and potential of interfaith dialogue we saw that dialogue had major role in development of stable and progressive community as well as society in general. The development of the model of civil society that we and majority of mankind lives in is conditioned by a good interfaith dialogue and it has to be based on four principles:

1. To become human, and be human, and to respect the dignity of every human being regardless of its religious determination. So, it means human being above all.
2. Dialogue that will be free, sincere and based on equality. Dictators are not tolerated and recognized by spirit of time.
3. The right to diversity. To respect and accept differences of the participants in dialogue without decrement or putting down the starting positions in dialogue.
4. Coexistence despite our peculiarities and diversities. Until recently we have had within fiqh schools (sharia / Islamic law schools) the division of the world on Darul-Islam (the house of peace) and Darul-Harb (the house of insecurity). Mainly, Darul-Islam referred to the area where Muslims lived and where they were guaranteed to fulfill their religious life. Non Muslims (dhimmi) are safe since Islamic/sharia law provides them with protection. The space of, so called, Darul-Harb is the one where Muslims are not allowed to live in accordance with their religious rules and because of that they feel insecurity.

Today, in literature, we can find mostly the term Darul-'Ahd what means "The house of agreement". We find this term as the most suitable in today's communication. Our society, and I mean here on Croatia, can be called Darul-'Ahd. Besides Catholic Church, the Government has already signed agreements with 14 other religious communities in Croatia, and it is expected two more religious

communities to sign such agreement. Those agreements have answered many questions of mutual interest (religious communities' and Government's). Among those religious communities that have signed agreement with Government is the Islamic Community in Croatia and that happened on 22nd of December 2002. Such agreements and those similar to them prevent potential confrontations; they level up all the religious communities before the law, foster unity and loyalty and oblige religious communities to associate in order to help in developing better and more functional dialogue environment. At the same time, religious communities are the partners to the Government in promotion of the universal values within society and this is achieved through different programs. We find this as the best way towards peace and stability within society.

We can witness that also there are those who are opposing development of interfaith dialogue. The part of Muslim and Christian community perceive interfaith dialogue as the attempt to conduct islamization or evangelization respectively. But it has to be said clearly that neither the aim of the interfaith dialoge is evangelization nor it is islamization, and that we, today, recognize its double role:

Primarily, interfaith dialogue is a way of communication between members of different cultures, nations and traditions,

b) interfaith dialogue is the only right way to meet other people and eliminate prejudices that exist about others. Mutual ignorance creates fobia, fobia creates contempt and hatred and hatred create the state of chaos. For Muslims, interfaith dialogue is not unfamiliar. Everything what muslim has to do is to follow Quranic principles completely. All the other is the part of God's will - that manages everything. Based on that the message is clear: We have to go towards interfaith dialogue fearless!

We have great examples in joint activities that had World Islamic League-Rabita and Vatican when they had organized Conference on population in 1994 in Cairo and after that they organized Conference about the position of women in 1995 in Beijing.

These two examples have shown that our mutual goal is to fight any kind of anarchy and to preserve the dignity of mankind.

Such examples we also have in Croatia when religious communities gave their thoughts about certain phenomenon that has occurred within society. Sometimes they do it in a way that they give joint statement, sometimes there are joint appeals and sometimes they give joint declaration on certain topic. It is important to mention that religious communities in Croatia are organized in World Conference Religions for Peace, which part is also the Islamic Community in Croatia.

3. Final remarks

Interfaith dialogue for Muslims is not the process that is only desired but also the necessary one. If it is conducted in accordance with the principles of Islam it does not mean islamisation but it means the presentation of Islam. Dialogue, as such, implies the

principle of universal and not particular good. It has its own principles:

- a) to learn and to change ourselves in accordance with what we have learned,
- b) to make dialogue bilateral and even multilateral,
- c) to be honest in dialogue,
- d) to give others the opportunity to define themselves,
- e) to enter the dialogue without prejudices and presumptions,
- f) to be equal in dialogue,
- g) continuous checking of our own stances.

I'm sure that this event is also conceptualized in order to promote peace and good between people. To all participants and Organization board I wish full success in realization of determined goals. Let be upon us all God's blessing and peace.

Biography

Mufti Dr. Aziz ef. Hasanović

President of Meshihat of Islamic Community in Croatia

Dr Aziz ef. Hasanović is currently the Director of Center of Halal Quality Certification in Croatia and of the Meshihat of the Islamic Community in Croatia. He was the Head Imam of this community in Zagreb until 2005.

He has taken part in several international conferences held in Amman, Teheran, Vienna or Istanbul. He also participates frequently in round table discussions on a variety of topics of religious, cultural, social, educational and humanitarian character in Croatia, Austria, Slovakia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"Democracy & Faith"

A Lecture by MP Lia Quartapelle (Member of the Italian Parliament, Democratic Party)

Rome; April 3rd, 2014



Thank you for the invitation, Mark and Davide. When I was asked to speak about the role of religion in cultural diplomacy I started thinking about my own job. As the Chairman suggested, I belong to a political force, the Democratic Party, which is trying to conjugate in Italian politics, somewhat successfully and somewhat unsuccessfully, the tradition of catholic parties in Italy with the tradition of communist parties. But I don't want to speak about Italian politics right now. I would like to talk about the problems that we, as politicians in different countries of the world, are facing concerning the role between religious beliefs and democracy, and especially the problems that have been posed by the Arab Spring. A number of events occurred in the Southern of the Mediterranean basin, and we have witnessed the emergence of political force of political Islam. Of course the relationships between political Islam and other democracies in the world is an issue for politicians, I would say. The relationship between faith and democracy has been analyzed by many researchers, and I believe in the room there are many people that know a lot more about the topic than I do, but I would like to point out three points and then elaborate a little bit

on what I think should be the main points of the relationship between Western political parties and Western political forces and Political Islam.

Of course, one of the main issues within a democratic Constitution is to protect free exercise of religion. We see this in the first Amendment to the US Constitution, we see it for example in the Italian Constitution at Article 3, where it says that "every citizen is equal in front of the law regardless of their religious belief", we see it in one very recent Constitution that have been approved, which is the Tunisian Constitution, that say that Islam is the State religion but the Constitution itself protects every religious belief. So the relationship between democracy and religion in many Constitution is one part of the quality of the democracy in those countries. However, there are many researchers that have suggested that religious beliefs and democracy have a difficulty getting along. First of all because in some sense, and I speak from the point of a view of a person who is a non religious believer, so I'm sorry if I touch on people sensitivity, in some way religions of course have an absolute idea of how of values and how the world should go and this in some way can be a problem when you come to a system where you have to negotiate between values, norms and beliefs. A second powerful force that makes religion sometimes difficult to get along with democracy is identity. We know that in different countries, for example Lebanon and Northern Ireland, religion has been used or has become a powerful flag for conflicts. At the same time, as politicians and as citizens, we all know that when you have to take decisions, you have to take into account the idea of a collective good. When you have to take decisions within the realm of politics, you need values in order to decide, and of course religion, as the experience even of my own party suggests, is a

powerful force helping politicians. Religious beliefs, religious values, the idea of a collective good, the idea that other people exist beside you, and the idea that you have to take other people's good into account, help politicians decide and help the moral health of democracy. And so, here we have a long history of ideas, of people, suggesting that religious values help democracies. Parties have been built on religious values. So, this is the introduction.

Now we come to the main issues that we as politicians are faced with today. We see that in many countries in the Mediterranean, political Islam, which is a way to interpreting the participation to the public life according to political values of Islam, has become an important force. In many discussions that we have, we have had for example yesterday with the Ambassador of Egypt, we always wonder how to consider this political force. Yesterday for example, the Ambassador of Egypt in Italy suggested that there is a very close tie between the Muslim brotherhood and fundamentalism. I personally believe, and this is some food for thought for you work this afternoon or to take home, coming from a country where religion has been such an important part of our political life (we have been governed for 40 years by a political party that was called the Christian Democrats) that of course religion is an important force when you take decisions. At the same time, I believe strongly that if we want democracy to take different shapes in different parts of the world, and if we want democracy to spread in different countries in the world, we do have to adapt to the idea that democracy can take different forms, and that political parties of course will not mirror the political parties that we see in Western democracy. We might see the emergence of political forces that have values mutated over other religions beliefs. I know that of course in the relationship with political Islam this idea is very very touchy, because as for example my meeting yesterday by chance with the

Ambassador of Egypt suggested, even within those countries that are experiencing the emergence of political Islam, representative forces do not agree with this idea completely. At the same time, we can not think that democracy will take the same shape that we have seen in the Western world, especially at a time when democracy in the Western world is facing many many problems. If you for example think about the emergence of populism and forces that are deeply against democracy within even Western Europe, which is where democracy is more widespread.

To end up with, I would like to give you a last suggestion, which comes from the discussions we have had about especially the relationship with different regimes like Iran in the recent past. Of course for Western democracy, in the fashion of European democracy or the US democracy, is difficult to relate to a regime that is deeply undemocratic like Iran. At the same time, we have to think that we have experienced in the past the idea of exporting democracy, and this has not worked very well. If we want to get to a world order, that is more inclusive and comprehensive of the beliefs, customs, and the norms that citizens in different parts of the world live in, we have also to come to terms with the idea of negotiating with regimes that are very different from our own. At the same time, trying to balance our deep beliefs and especially the idea of human rights and liberal values but at the same time understanding that regimes in our part of the world might take some time to evolve to this kind of standards. I know it's difficult but we are in a meeting where I believe people are very open to discussion, people are very keen to put their values, their way of living and their beliefs in common in order to find a common solution to the world's problems. Thank you •

Biography

MP Lia Quartapelle
Member of the Italian Parliament, Democratic Party

Lia Quartapelle is a member of the Italian Democratic Party.

She was born and raised in Milan, when she was 17 she moved to Wales on a scholarship and finished her studies at the United World College of the Atlantic.

She studied a masters at SOAS in Economics in London and in 2012 a doctorate in Developmental Economics from the University of Pavia.

She worked for the CIVICUM foundation in the field of transparency within public administration.

In 2007 she moved to Mozambique where she worked with the government as an economist as a political analysis, aiding development.

She currently works at the ISPI for political studies in Milan.

In 2009 she was elected a member of parliament.

"The Role of Culture and Cultural Diplomacy in Peace"

A Lecture by H. E. Amb. Mai Alkaila, Ambassador of Palestine to Italy

Rome; April 3rd, 2014



Good morning, it's my pleasure to be here and talk about cultural diplomacy, especially because I come from Palestine; and as you know we are in the peace process and are hoping that it will end one day in a peaceful manner. My lecture is about the role of culture, cultural diplomacy and peace.

Culture is defined as the whole complex of knowledge, belief, art, morals, customs, laws and any other capabilities and habits created by man who is a member of society where a group of people is related to each other through persistent relations or a large social grouping sharing the skills, the geographical or virtual territory. They are subject to the same political authority and dominate cultural expectations.

Milton Cummings defined cultural diplomacy as the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding.

Another definition defines cultural diplomacy as the exchange of ideas, information, art and culture to promote mutual understanding among citizens of different countries. Therefore, cultural diplomacy is regarded as forming international bridges and

interactions, identifying networks and power domains within culture, and transcending national and cultural boundaries. According to the book 'The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the 20th Century'; a survey within the book regarded the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy and it was observed that cultural diplomacy is an effective practice considering its outcome and impacts on international ties between countries. This survey proves that cultural diplomacy helps create a foundation of trust with other people which policy makers can build on to reach political, economic and military agreements.

Bruce Spinoza defined peace as not an absence of war; it is a virtual state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence and justice. Peace is a word that is frequently uttered as truth, beauty and love. Common synonyms for peace include friendship, harmony, concord, tranquillity, repose, pacification, neutrality etc. In my opinion, the prerequisite factors for peace are freedom, human rights, political and social justice, democratisation and community building of an authority. Theoretically, the importance of cultural diplomacy in peace-making is crucial in an increasingly globalised, interdependent world in which the proliferation of mass communication technology ensures we all have greater access to each other than ever before. Cultural diplomacy is critical to fostering peace and stability throughout the world.

Cultural diplomacy when learned and applied at all levels possesses the ability to influence the global public opinion and ideology of individuals, communities, cultures and nations. This can therefore accelerate the realisation of the principles of respect and recognition of cultural diversity and heritage; of the protection of international human

rights; of global intercultural dialogue of justice equality, interdependence and finally, global peace and stability.

Therefore my case study is about cultural diplomacy programs between Israel, Palestine and neighbouring Arab countries. In the last twenty years, there have been attempts at providing activities of cultural diplomacy between Israel and its neighbouring Arab countries, including Palestine. These were either directed on a bilateral level or by a third party – which was the most. The intent was to lay a foundation of trust and understanding among the mass public of both sides.

In most cases these programs took place in third party countries because of political reasons and because of the need for both parties to detach themselves from their daily work and peer-pressure. According to the ex-director of the Middle East Projects Department in the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was said that sponsored large scale cultural diplomacy programs do not exist between Israel and its neighbouring Arab countries. However, there is some small scale cooperation between Israel, Palestine and Arab countries who signed a peace agreement with Israel including Jordan and Egypt. These small scale activities are usually run by NGO's that involve both Palestinians and Israeli's; such as meetings between families, education programs for youth and more. One example of a Non-Governmental Cultural Diplomacy program occurred between Israel and Palestine and Arabs in August 2007 where a meeting of Palestinian, Arab and Israeli students took place in Berlin with the aim of breaking the cycle of hostility. Another example of such a program is a series of seminars for young Israelis and Palestinians who are members of political parties and activities who are considered to be future leaders. And a third example of such a cultural diplomacy program is where Jordanians participated in a marathon in Israel.

However after these activities, no evaluation of the impact of these on the culture of peace of these

groups took place or at least I couldn't find any evidence of this. Cultural diplomacy between Israel, Palestine and Arab countries encounters challenges. Almost every cultural diplomacy activity between Israel and the Middle East countries is considered by the parties as political activity. In addition, the challenges of cultural diplomacy in this area are met with local and regional political and security realities that prevail on their programs. For example, the invasion of the Israeli military forces, or settlers attacking Palestinian civilians, the demolition of Palestinian houses by Israeli military forces or military attacks to Palestinian cities which occur on a daily basis could immediately freeze existing cultural diplomacy activities between Israel and its neighbouring Arab countries, including Palestine. There was a paralysis of communications between Israel and its neighbouring countries as well; its worth mentioning that even if there is an agreement among these countries, there is no penetration of the cultural diplomacy programs voluntarily by the general population.

So what are the challenges of cultural diplomacy in making peace in our case? Does this program of cultural diplomacy have a positive impact on the Israeli-Palestinian-Arab case? Dear friends, although the literature recognises the benefits of cultural diplomacy in strengthening international ties between countries, thus improving relations which favour a positive atmosphere and helping to resolve conflicts, the lack of respect by Israel for international law and the daily abuse of international human rights are undermining all efforts and activities of those programs of cultural diplomacy. Thus, the above mentioned challenges leads us to think that cultural diplomacy is an effective tool for peace building, however this should be accompanied with political will and justice, social justice, democracy and respect to human rights that are crucial to make cultural diplomacy work.

Thank you very much.

Biography

H. E. Amb. Mai Alkaila
Ambassador of Palestine to Italy

Dr. Mai Al-Kaila has been the Palestinian Ambassador to Chile for the past four years and is currently Ambassador to Italy. Born in Jerusalem, she studied medicine at Birzeit University and completed her studies in Spain and the United States. For 17 years, Ms. Al-Kaila worked with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) - the UN agency responsible for providing services to Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West bank and the Gaza Strip - in the women and child health program in the West Bank.

"From deconstruction to reconstruction of civil society through interreligious dialogue"

A lecture by Olivera Jovanovic, Secretary General of Interreligious council in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Rome; April 3rd, 2014



Your Eminencies, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Amidst many attempts to turn interreligious dialogue from the domain of the impossible into an example of know-who, know-what and, finally, show-how communication, I will try to present to you a specific path from deconstruction to reconstruction of civil society through interreligious dialogue.

Interreligious dialogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be subsumed under the principle of know-how, as opposed to explicit knowledge, since we do not know whether it would be possible to apply the same methods anywhere else. Is it possible to explain our interreligious know-how to others? Our know-how is our asset, but we are willing to share it with others if I can manage to explain just how we learned to carry out the interreligious process. As there is no recipe for a successful marriage – instead, two people recognize each other and carry on together - and just as there is no such thing as an absolutely successful marriage without any problems to overcome, our inter-religious path from deconstruction to reconstruction went through all phases of encountering and solving problems,

which, in real life, represents maturity - in this case, the maturity of the Inter-religious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I speak on behalf of the Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina in which the Islamic community, Serbian Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church, and the Jewish community operate together. IRC BiH is not an overseeing authority, but it is a body of goodwill of our traditional and historically established churches and religious communities. It is a body in which decisions are made by consensus, rather than by voting and outvoting. There are many interreligious councils in the world today, but it should be emphasized that the first time this name was used in Bosnia and Herzegovina when religious leaders came together with the purpose of formal reconciliation of the peoples, which marked the beginning of an incredible journey from deconstruction to reconstruction of civil society through interreligious dialogue.

Imagine a complete deconstruction in the material and moral sense, endless hatred and, amidst this total chaos, an abuse of religion resulting from the lack of religious knowledge - atheism and banishment of God. I take this standpoint when speaking about this time period, even though crimes were committed in the First and Second World War, when there was no atheism in such form. However, going back again to 1997 when the Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina was established only a year and a half since the war ended, it was quickly realized that I will quote here Dr. William Vendley, Secretary General of the Religions for Peace, "peace has always been more than the absence of war or violence." Dr Vendley is the main


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culprit for our inception, he is the predecessor of Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the outset of my interreligious engagement, fifteen years ago, I realized that the form often slides by and the essence remains intact. Namely, in the public discussion part of a conference on the topic of reconciliation in the Balkans, one participant spoke about the dire necessity of reconciliation. As chance would have it, I heard this same participant – a believer, speak with hatred about the members of another denomination during a break. I was defeated by what I heard, but many experiences afterward made me happy because I learned early on to recognize the form devoid of substance, to fight against hypocrisy and masks, against false pretences. Internal struggle is the first step to success in interreligious dialogue. Confrontation through dialogue and expressing your opinion is healthier and more natural than hiding it and cultivating hypocrisy which yields no fruit. Or to let the time heal the issues which can later be talked through freely. *Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in Illis.*

Following the establishment of the Interreligious Council within a deconstructed society, where the whole system was turned upside down, the questions were how can interreligious dialogue start the process of reconciliation, and whether a formal gathering of religious leaders within a Council signifies the reconciliation of communities and peoples? Does the form equal the substance? Through all these considerations, we entered a long-term process in which everything seemed impossible far too often. It was a time of science fiction in the field of interreligious dialogue, when we relied on God in reconstruction of the society through interreligious dialogue.

Although the Council was established with the goal of reconciliation, we quickly realized that reconciliation is a long-term process, and that the transition from total deconstruction to reconstruction is not simple. Reconstruction requires a sound foundation, and we did not have that in Bosnia. For the vast majority of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, civil society was a mystery because it was often confused with

something new and unfamiliar and, sometimes, with secularization and wrong interpretation of it.

After realizing that ad hoc reconciliation is a mission impossible, we initiated the promotion of interreligious dialogue through specific projects and, through them, the promotion of building of civil society in its true form. The first stand on the promotion of interreligious dialogue in the service of civil society was the drafting of the Law on Freedom of Religion – until then, an anachronistic Law from 1976 was in force. IRC BiH formed an expert group of lawyers, both from within the country and from abroad, that created the draft law following highest European standards. The draft was proposed to the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who delegated it to the Assembly. The law was adopted. This means that, on our first stop on the journey from deconstruction to reconstruction of civil society through interreligious dialogue, we facilitated the communication between the State and the churches and religious communities, and vice versa. Following the adoption of the law, we organized a roundtable where we educated the imams and priests about their rights and obligations under the new law. The State and the Council successfully cooperated on this Act; however, cooperation with the State on the issue of restitution of nationalized property, for example, has not been a success story. The IRC BiH never claimed sole entitlement to anything. On the issue of nationalized property, the Council is of the opinion that the process of restitution of property should be applied equally for churches and religious communities, and for all citizens in the country.

However, through many more successful examples, we were moving away from deconstruction, step by step, through interreligious dialogue and our contribution to building the civil society. Reconstruction of civil society through interreligious dialogue had touched the media as well, as we had created a Glossary of religious terms with journalists as our target group because they were educated in the former system and religion was not a familiar topic for them. It became increasingly understood by the media that it is for the benefit of civil society to publicize the good news instead of the bad, but

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it was not easy to work with the media initially. The situation is different today; the media respond to our invitations and promote interreligious work.

In the process of building the civil society through interreligious dialogue and the reconstruction of society within our scope of action, we involved priests, imams, women, youth, young theologians, teachers of religious education, and all members of churches and religious communities, respecting, of course, the structure and teachings of each community engaged in dialogue. Today, we have a state-wide network of women of faith, young people spend time together – they work together on many projects, young theologians visit colleges of other religions and learn from theologians who study there; there are twelve Committees for interreligious cooperation at the local level, we monitor the attacks on places of worship (unfortunately, the hatred toward one people is most frequently expressed through desecration of their place of worship) and try to act preventively. A historic moment was when we organized a conference for teachers of religious education from all religious communities (religious education exists in public schools in BiH), with the aim of breaking prejudice about other groups, so that they can teach the children within their own religious group about other beliefs, and prevent the abuse of religion. Many humanitarian and educational and other aspects are contained in the idea of interreligious dialogue; however, my personal favourite aspect of interreligious action is the human aspect, in recognizing in everyone a person with their own needs and issues!

Imagine how a priest or imam of a desecrated church or mosque must feel, moreover if he is a minority in a particular region, when we visit on behalf of the Interreligious Council and publicly support him, and join the police and local authorities in monitoring the attacks. Aside from the official investigation overseen by the Council, I remember the look in the eyes of every priest or imam, I remember every hand grasping mine in gratitude, and the infinite trust. We have created an environment of trust and confidence in communication, and this is our favourite aspect of reconstruction. Through

the project of monitoring the attacks on places of worship, the IRC BiH contributes to the initiative of adopting the UN Resolution on the protection of sacred sites throughout the world.

The journey from deconstruction to reconstruction of civil society through interreligious dialogue takes a lot of work as well as a lot of patience, because every epoch and every area are specific and unique, and have their own know-how. Sometimes, an initiated process can be completed only through waiting, i.e. through faith. Through interreligious dialogue, churches and religious communities can give their maximum in building of civil society.

In conclusion:

In order to transition from deconstruction of a society into its reconstruction and to follow the path towards successful building of civil society through interreligious dialogue, taught by its experience, the Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina recommends the following: respect an individual because they are each unique, respect the structure of churches and religious communities because they are not hippie communes but communities with their own teachings and regulations, respect others' pain as no one has exclusive right to pain, recognize hypocrisy as a form without substance. When you cannot understand someone, put yourself in their situation, slip inside a pair of their shoes, walk in them and you will clear away any confusion. You will then be able to join the reconstruction of civil society through interreligious dialogue with an open mind and clear conscience.

Interreligious dialogue exists institutionally - for example, the IRC BiH is active in Bosnia. Interreligious dialogue serves to demolish the walls of prejudice within ourselves and then the walls further afield: in the community and the society.

In interreligious dialogue, other teachings are respected and never questioned.

Interreligious dialogue exists in everyday communication and that is the strongest institution of interreligious dialogue. This microcosmos of interreligious dialogue, of the culture

of interreligious communication through which we express our mutual respect provides us with the strength and power to believe that everything is possible because, if it was not, we would not be where we are now, attempting to use interreligious dialogue in building a future for humans who are still God's most perfect creation, and that perfection gives us the love that we need to have for each other,

so that each believer might become an interreligious dialogue diplomat with strong sensitivity, love, and knowledge of others who are different and in the end: that each believer considers interreligious dialogue as part of cultural diplomacy.

Thank you •

Biography

Secretary General Olivera Jovanovic
Secretary General of Interreligious council in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Olivera Jovanovic is currently the Secretary General of the Inter-Religious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a body that aims to build tolerance and civil society through project work.

The Executive Board consists of the 4 members including Olivera Javanovic, appointed by religious leaders, who meet at least once a month to make decisions in coordination with the Secretariat on administrative and project activities of the IRC-B&H Office.

The work of the IRC is based on five groups: a legal experts group, a media group, an education group, a women's group and a youth group.

"The Promotion of World Peace through Inter-Faith Dialogue & the Unity of Faiths"

A Lecture by Rev. Fr. Patrick H. Daly, General Secretary of Comece, the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community.

Rome; April 3rd, 2014



I feel very privileged to be among you. When I was invited to speak, I decided I would have reflected on what I saw as the challenges and difficulties of intercultural dialogue. We are in Rome and I am a catholic priest, so I hope you would not mind if I start with the current challenges of the Catholic Church.

Pope John Paul the Second, soon to be declared Saint, opened up the idea of a new evangelization. The new millennium was about to begin and there were indications that the Church was failing to get its message across. Church Congregations were declining for all variety of reasons across the Western world; there was a growing ignorance of Christianity, a growing hostility into many societies towards the Christian principles and so it was quite clear that if the Church wanted to survive at all, the Church had to start evangelizing again.

In my view, the central crisis is one of narrative, because Judeo-Christian religion is based primarily on a story. It is the story, which we find in the pages of the Bible, both in the Old Testament and in the New. Two chapters we called the Old Covenant or the Old Testament and the New Testament or

the New Covenant, and they concern the relation between God and His people, which occurred in history. There is a lot of myth, of course, but there is a historical hard-core to the account. It is a story really of God's love. Of Him restyling with His people, of Him leading His people, being angry with them, but of continually demonstrating, as a good father does with his child, that he loves them. This is the conviction of those of us who are Christians that the greatest gesture of love, which he showed, was in sending his only son in entering into our world in the person of Jesus who became through his passion, death and resurrection, the Christ. That of course is the Christians' story and there is awful a lot more to it. But we realise that even though in our Western culture, and you have only to read Shakespeare, Milton, or the German or French literature, the literature of most countries of the West, there is an assumption or at least an acknowledge of the Christian culture. Even if you are not fans of P. G. Wodehouse, the English comic writer, they are too many references to the Christian deposit of culture.

The fact is that people grow up in a certain culture and they become alienated from it, and it is very difficult, indeed, to bring them back to it. That is the precise challenge of the new evangelization and that is why to some extent it is already encountering huge difficulties, because we adapt something we have never heard before much more easily than we assimilate something, which we believe we are familiar with, but which we do not understand.

Therefore, the primly challenge to Christianity, and to Catholicism in particular, is to retell the story in such a way that people understand what is behind it. I often think, when I see Chinese or Japanese tourists going around the National Gallery in London

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and looking at these paintings, so many of them frescoed with great beauty and exquisite artistic skill the Christian story, do they actually find the paintings beautiful to start with? That is an aesthetic question, but unless they know the story behind the true meaning of the painting simply can't come true. Similarly in a city like Rome, where Christian symbols are shouting at you all the time. Do people actually know what they mean, understand their significance and how they can move people minds and hearts? Even we, Catholics, that are believers find it difficult and that is why we have to keep telling to ourselves the story every year. Not because it is a particularly attractive story, but because we believe firmly that in that story lies the deeper mystery of our salvation.

I hope I have made that point, that behind the narrative, which needs to be told and retold because people forget very easily, there is also a story that has to be understood. And that is where we get to the nod of the problem.

I consider myself a reasonably educated man and I am sure I am very much less than most of the people here, but I read newspapers, I read a lot of novels in a variety of languages, I have studied at the university and I have lived in a multicultural city as a pastor for fourteen years. Nonetheless, I have to admit that I don't know Islam very well, Mecca doesn't mean a great deal for me. Do I know the Koran? Do I know what story it tells? Does it touch my heart or can I empathise with it? Most important, if I knew it, would it help me to understand better the world of Islam? I think that dialogue is not possible unless we start by knowing and understanding. So, what I think, Mark, you are attempting to do, and I admire you for doing it, is actually education, but also helping people to appreciate the values under the story. The thrust about God. Do I and a Hindu have the same concept of the Transcendent for example? Or is my way of thinking so determined by the Greco-Roman inheritance, which have formed my religious consciousness that I cannot engaged with somebody who has relativist or a multitude of deists? Do we, from a monotheistic tradition, and that includes Islam, Judaism and Christianity, can

we enter in dialogue with Buddhism, for example, where the concept of divinity is very vague indeed, or with the Hinduism which have a variety of deists? Even when we use the word God, are we talking about the same thing?

The appeal I want to make to you is to think about how a story is told. To think about understanding people's hearts, people's customs, which all are vehicles for meaning. So, Paschal is a meal, but it is celebrated in such a way that is a vehicle for paternal relation with the family, for the insurance that God is entering into people's lives, as liberation of people from captivity and set them free. Therefore, it raises a big question about the meaning and understanding of freedom, our sense of belonging one to another, since we are brothers and sisters in the Lord, and our relationship with God. What applies in the Judeo-Christian tradition or in Islam, will also analogously apply to the world of Buddhism or Hinduism.

The final thing I would like to say in my short contribution is that I am endeavouring to facilitate the Church in telling another narrative, in helping telling other stories. The European Union, the European process, the European project is of the enormous importance, because it is in my conviction that we have succeeded in living together in peace for 70 years, because we have decided to put our resources, to put aside the conflicts and to make sacrifices for the common good. Now, the pursuing of the common good is at the very heart of the Catholic social teachings, and the twin ideas of solidarity between people who are different and subsidiarity, meanly allowing people to become who they think they are best. I have to be able to pursue my ideals and to allow you to pursue yours. This applies in the area of Church-States relations in the various countries of the European Union and also to our parliamentary traditions. So the one great dividing line in much of the Europe is that most of the European states have a constitutional and codified law, and others have common law. Should we suppress one and decide to take the other over? We decided not. We decided that we would have unity in diversity.

I would like to finish by reflecting on the fact that

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we have huge difficulties by telling the European story. Now that we are in the third generation of the European Union it is important that we retell its story, that we do think that we made two wars, one after the other, that we have liquidated part of our population, that we have conspired in enormous atrocities against other human beings. In the name of culture, by the way, because our culture was superior and the others have to disappear.

Intercultural dialogue means mutual appreciation. This appreciation can only be deepened if we have mutual understanding, and this understanding can only grow if we know a little about one another, but also if we are tolerant to the others as well.

I have always discovered as a pastor, and that is the golden rule I applied in my all life as priest, trying to

help people to re-join their faith, that you have to meet people where they are. You may want to bring them somewhere else, but you cannot force them. I think the way we live our lives, our convictions, refine our humanity, make us people the other people want to be with. Then, the dialogue process will be facilitated, our understanding of one another's cultural parameters will be widened, our appreciation of what we do for one another will be deepened.

I think that unity of common humanity, the values we all share, the religious truths that are fundamental to all who believe in God, a God who loves his people, will unite us, eventually.

Thank you •

Biography

Rev. Fr. Patrick H. Daly
General Secretary of Comece, the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community

Patrick Daly was born in Dublin in May 1951, and grew up in Sligo. He received his secondary education from the Jesuits, studied at University College Dublin (UCD) and, thanks to a generous postgraduate scholarship from the Belgian (Flemish) Ministry of Culture, did a PhD in Medieval History at Louvain. Between 1981 and 1987 he worked as an interpreter on the staff of the European Commission. After four years as a student for the Birmingham Diocese at the Beda College, Rome, he was ordained priest by the late Archbishop Maurice Couve de Murville on 5 April 1991.

Archbishop Maurice represented the English & Welsh bishops on COMECE in the 1990's and, as of 1992, involved Fr Daly in this side of his work, both by allowing to accompany him to COMECE plenary meetings in Brussels and by involving him in the work of the European Affairs Committee of the English & Welsh Bishops' Conference in London. After two years as a curate, from 1993 until 2013 Fr Daly was a full-time parish priest, first at St. Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, and since 1999 at St. Peter & St. Paul, Wolverhampton.

"Recognition of the proximity of spiritual values in international law"

A lecture by His Excellency Théodore Comlanvi Loko (Ambassador of Benin to the Holy See)

Rome; April 3rd, 2014



Cultural diplomacy in which we are engaged is a type of public diplomacy and soft power that includes the "exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and peoples in order to foster mutual understanding." The purpose of cultural diplomacy is the understanding of the institutions and nations' ideals in an effort to build broad support for economic and political goals. The effect The Beatles had in Russia during the Cold War is an example of how music artists and their songs can become political. In the context of religion, cultural diplomacy seeks to convince and propose not to win and impose. Ultimately, its goal is to convince other believers and use that positive influence, which is built up over the long term, as a sort of good will reserve to win support for policies. It seeks to harness the elements of culture to induce believers to:

- have a positive view of the believers of other religions,
- induce greater cooperation between believers of other religion,
- aid in changing the phenomenon of

perception,

- prevent, manage and mitigate conflict with the believers of other religions.

In general, freedom of religion refers to the basic subjective right of persons to choose and practice a given religion and the assessment of the compliance with such right. By extension, it refers to the various legal acts, declarations, treaties, conventions, laws, constitutional enactments which enable to assert, defend, extend or limit such right. As a consequence, it is allowed to assert that freedom of religion is a political principle that the States have to transpose in their positive law.

From this point of view, it is understandable that the Decalogue of Conference for peace precises in its item 10 that : "(The participants) undertake to require the leaders of the nations to make all possible efforts so that, at the national and international level, a world of solidarity and peace based on justice be constructed and strengthened."

In internal law, the practice of the States having a long experience in the field shows that the opposability in the field of freedom of religion towards human dignity and security supposes two requirements, namely: the requirement of minimal service and the requirement of public order. The requirement of minimal service and the one of public order go through the technique of legislation and the establishment of measures likely to ensure the effectiveness of the rights in question and preventing uncontrolled and uncontrollable elements from causing prejudices.

In international law, the approach is remarkable, considering the nature of the international society itself. It follows logic. Indeed, considering the state

of insecurity and violence, there is not really other answer than common responsibility and this also supposes a common platform. Pope Benoît XVI was therefore right when he was saying to the presidents of religious issues in Turkey, on November 28, 2006 : "Christians and Muslims, in following their respective religions, insist on the truth of the sacred nature and the dignity of the person. This is the basis for our mutual respect and esteem, this is the basis for our collaboration towards peace between the nations and the peoples, the dearest wish of all the believers and all persons showing goodwill."

In this respect, it appears judicious to research the proximity of spiritual values in the several initiatives

in process at the level of the international society. This proximity goes through two approaches, promotion of peace and construction of the Rule of law.

The Study on the recognition of the proximity of spiritual values in international law provides the advantage of setting the points of crystallization of a corpus of "standards" in the field of peace building and Rule of law contributing to the evolution of political culture, with an articulation of the initiatives of the global community and that of the supreme political power (I) as well as strengthening the legal realism (II)•

Biography

H.E. The Amb. Théodore Comlanvi LOKO
Ambassador of Benin to the Holy See

H.E. Amb. Théodore C. Loko has been the Ambassador of Benin to the Holy See since the 28th of May, 2010. He met with the former Pope Benedict on several occasions. He has also published the books: "The international law of the State of Law, European University Editions" and "Diplomacy of the Holy See, Libreria Editrice Vaticana".

"Citizen Diplomacy, Minefields & Miracles: Why God and Allah Need to Talk"

A Lecture by Ruth Broyde Sharone, Filmmaker, Author & Journalist, Southern California Parliament of the World's Religions

Rome; April 3rd, 2014



I am going to share with you the first of my two main mottos that I use during my interfaith engagements; the first motto is: strangers are people who haven't yet met. So no one here at this moment is a stranger; we've all met.

I want to thank the ICD first of all for the opportunity to come from America and to share some of my work with you and also to tell you about the interfaith observer which is an online magazine which I hope you will all subscribe to – every month you will get articles from contributors all over the world who are talking about this very, very important work that we are doing together. In a moment I am going to show you a film that I made after 9/11 called 'God and Allah Need to Talk.' But first, I would like to share something with you from a book that I published last year and actually, what I am going to read to you is a tribute to the interfaith workers of the world: it's called 'Minefields and Miracles: Why God and Allah Need to Talk.' I want to share this with you, because this is really an ode and this is a way of saying thank you to all of you who are in this field; whether you have been in it for forty years or whether you are just studying and entering into it.

"I have come to believe that the most important and urgent work being done on the planet today is the work of interfaith engagement. Yet regardless of how crucial our mission may be people always ask us the same question: "What propels you to enter these minefields?"

I believe I am responding for myself and for all of my interfaith colleagues around the world when I say: we enter this territory because we must. We are compelled by visions of interfaith harmony no less mesmerising than the ones that captivated the imaginations of our explorer ancestors. Visions of a new world of unlimited potential; of great opportunity and spiritual wealth. We know with certainty that our interfaith world is curved, not flat. So do we also know our faith is not linear; our faith is particle and wave – as are we. As voyagers guided by our heavenly stars and constellations we believe that just beyond the horizon is a fertile and welcoming world where people of many faiths can live in mutual respect and compassion. A land of unity within diversity, and diversity within unity. It is a world so rich in potential for inner and outer peace that we are willing to risk all. We are willing to abandon the comfort of our familiar individual religions and well-worn scriptures and enter the unknown territory of the other. We are curious, adventurous and our hearts are open. We are fascinated by the individual and personal spiritual paths of our sisters and brothers. We are also devoted to our own path and are happy to be pursuing it. We do not feel a need to have everyone believe or worship exactly as we do. We enjoy comparing rituals and beliefs; we marvel at our similarities and we take note of our differences. We call out to the creator and the universe in our distinct voices. But we also hear the sincerity in the voices of our brothers and sisters

and in the melodies that are not our own. We tell stories about ourselves and our experiences; our stories merge, converge and diverge. We marvel at the variation of themes, we play our individual instruments and we submit ourselves to the great conductor. We look like everyone else and have no distinguishing body marks: we come in all skin colours, ages and genders, all shapes and sizes. You will recognise us because we are border crossers – not across national and political lines but across spiritual and religious boundaries. We feel at home both in our own communities and in other people's communities. We move freely and easily between multiple worlds but we do not require passports or inked stamps to know when we left and when we returned; we may even inhabit those parallel worlds

simultaneously.

We are border crossers because even as we recognise the philosophical and religious borders that separate us we do not allow them to keep us from honouring our fellow travellers. And as we interfaith explorers discover one another and as our networks of interfaith grow and expand across the globe like a giant golden web – just think about that image for a moment, like a giant golden web, that's what's happening here and that's happening in every place in the world where people are doing this work. As we consider that giant golden web we know with certainty we have not undertaken this whole adventure in vain." •

“Restoring Faith: Reviving the Role of Religion in the Promotion of World Peace”

A lecture by Sheikh Ramzy, Imam, Director of Iqra Islamic institute

Rome; April 3rd, 2014



Dear friends, brothers and sisters,

I greet you with the Islamic greeting of peace: Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullah. May the peace and blessing of Almighty Allah be up on you all.

Almighty God tells us in the Holy Scripture: ‘O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. Indeed, God is Knowing and Acquainted.’

Man was not created to be at war, we were created to live in peace alongside one another. Religion, if practised correctly is the source of this peace. Despite the way in which it is presented, it is not religion that causes war, but the distortion of religion. In a world which is plagued with conflict, religion should not fan the flames, but extinguish them. The darkness of hatred and injustice can only be overcome with light, and religion provides this light.

Unfortunately, this is not how religion is seen today. In order to restore faith in the true potential of religion in uniting rather than dividing people, we need to implement the true teachings of world

faiths in areas of conflict. The aim of this conference is to examine and analyse how this has been done in the past and how this can be done in present times. In my opinion, in order to restore religion’s role as peacemaker, we must identify the common principles which unite faiths and pinpoint their role in overcoming conflict and restoring peace.

If we examine each religion, in particular the Abrahamic faiths, between which conflict seems to rage so violently in many areas, we find each of them have the following principles at their core:

Forgiveness

Empathy, mercy and respect

Social justice

Each of these elements are key in the pursuit of peace. And I believe members of all religions need to come together and unite around these principles in order for peace to take root. Let us take each of these principles briefly in turn to examine their importance in the peace process:

Firstly, forgiveness. This is found in every faith:

The Qur’an tells us to: “Hold to forgiveness, command what is right, and turn away from the ignorant.” [Qur’an, 7:199] In another verse Almighty God commands that: “... They should rather pardon and overlook. Would you not love Allah to forgive you? Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [Qur’an, 24:22] The Bible, Matthew 6:14-15, states: ‘For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.’

In Jewish Holy Scriptures too, we are told: ‘It is forbidden for a person to be cruel and not grant pardon. One should rather easily forgive and not

easily grow angry, and when the offender requests forgiveness he should forgive with a full heart and generous spirit.’ (Hilkhot Teshuva 2:10)

Forgiveness is vital if we wish to rise above the disputes of the past. It is not enough for political settlements to be made, if the people themselves have not forgiven each other for past crimes. Without forgiveness, old grudges, enmity, hatred and unrest will continue. To lay these to rest, forgiveness must be practiced. Once it has, wounds can begin to heal and enemies can become friends.

Few understood the true power of forgiveness better than Nelson Mandela, who said: “As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn’t leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I’d still be in prison.” Too many countries are still imprisoned by past crimes and conflicts, and until the key of forgiveness is turned in the lock, the gates to peace will remain firmly closed.

The second set of principles comprises empathy, mercy and respect. Whilst these are all very distinct, I believe each contributes to the other. Empathy, first of all, requires an understanding, not just of each others’ faiths and practices, but also of others’ culture, way of thinking, beliefs and feelings. Once we have established this understanding between faiths, it needs to be acted upon with mercy. If we are able to treat one another with mercy, it then becomes easier for each side to develop respect for one another, and so to see each other in a human light. Without these three elements, the ‘other’ is dehumanised, enemies become animals, and their right to life is eroded. Women, children and the elderly become targets and the foundations of societies are destroyed. To rebuild, we must sow the seeds of empathy and teach mercy, not retaliation. The Qur’an, for example, teaches that we should return an action with what is better: ‘And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.’ (41:34)

A third pillar of religion, which if harnessed can

fuel the engine of peace, is social justice. Religion teaches the equality of all in the eyes of God. Every human being is deserving of kindness and concern. The blessed Prophet (pbuh) once said “he is not a Muslim who sleeps with his stomach full while his neighbour stays hungry”, and in Judaism, we find the principle of tzedakah, “the religious obligation to perform charity and charitable acts”. Gandhi was right when he said: ‘Poverty is the worst form of violence’ – not only is it violence against a people to deprive them of sustenance and safety, but it can also drive them to violence, since they have nothing to lose.

For peace to take root, the ethical, pro-social resources within the religious traditions must be emphasized. Extremism often gains momentum amongst poor, deprived and alienated communities. Anti-poverty and anti-prejudice activism should be an integral part of any peace process. If we do not establish justice in our own communities, it is futile to hope that there is any prospect for peace at an international level. We must demonstrate the care that we are commanded to by God towards our countrymen, so that desperation might not take root.

Practically, religion is a source of social mobilization. We have witnessed this most recently in the work of Pope Francis, who has brought together his followers from all over the globe. I believe the key to his success is his humility, his willingness to not only stand on the pulpit, but to wash the feet of his fellow humans. It is selfless acts such as these, performed in the true name of religion that unites people in peace. If all religious leaders could mobilize such great numbers of people acting in forgiveness, with mercy and respect, we can rise against the tides of violence. To be truly successful in the quest for peace, however, religions must unite in this uprising. And for this to happen, we need to come together in dialogue.

In my opinion, there are two levels of dialogue which need to take place, inter-faith and intra-faith. I believe interfaith dialogue should revolve around the acknowledgement and implementation of these

principles. Faiths, particularly in areas of conflict, need to work together to ensure these are put into practice. We need understanding in order to fuel empathy, we need to recognize each others' wounds in order to forgive, and to stand together against poverty and social injustice so that we might restore trust and respect. In this way interfaith dialogue can work alongside political diplomacy, with the latter providing settlements and the former establishing a culture of reconciliation and relationship building which will allow peace to thrive.

As well as this, we need intra-faith dialogue. People within faiths need to unite around these principles so that they take root within as well as between societies. Religious leaders are key in this effort, we must sow the seeds of forgiveness, empathy, mercy,

respect and social justice in our own fields first, if we wish these seeds to spread.

Religion has too often been sidelined in the search for peace. We must restore faith in religion's potential to promote peace, and restore it to its true role as a source of good on this earth. By coming together, within faiths, and between faiths, I believe we can achieve this objective.

We have been travelling for too long down a dark tunnel of violence and hatred. I pray that this conference will provide a light at the end of that tunnel and that one day peace will become a reality not just a goal, I pray that mankind will live in harmony in the way Almighty God prescribed and I pray that we all live to see this day. May Almighty Allah bless you all. Thank you for listening.

Biography

Sheik Ramzy

Director of Iqra Islamic institute

Dr. Sheikh Ramzy is first and foremost an Imam and the Director of IQRA Islamic Institute. In addition to this, he is Peace Ambassador for Universal Peace Federation and Chair of the Ed Com Muslim Council of Britain.

Dr Sheikh Ramzy is also founder of the Oxford Islamic Information Center and speaks often of the unity required between Jews, Muslims and other religious communities in the Levant, a region encompassing modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan.

Ramzy has a PhD in Islamic studies from Oxford Brookes University.

"Creation Theology as the Essential Basis of Inter-Faith Dialogue and Mutual Respect"

A Lecture by The Very Revd Prof. James Atwell, Head of Winchester Cathedral

Rome; April 3rd, 2014



Thank you. Friends and colleagues, it is a great privilege to address this conference on a subject crucial to our generation and to the peace and security of our world. Trust and dialogue between the great faiths of the world is absolutely essential. As professor Hans Küng prophetically stated in what is now the previous millennium, not just the previous century: "no survival without a world ethic. No world peace without peace between the religions." The decades since professor Küng have proved his voice to be prophetic. We are much indebted to our host, Institute for Cultural Diplomacy for enabling this conference to make a contribution to that work. It is from grains of sands that beaches are made.

Let me just introduce myself very rapidly just to give a sense from where I am coming from. My current responsibility is Dean of Winchester in the United Kingdom. That means I am head of foundation of Winchester Cathedral. There is Winchester Cathedral. Bit like a ship riding an anchor. Winchester was the capital of Saxton Kingdom of Wessex from which the England was first United under a king called Athelstan. It was therefore capital of England before London. The Saxton minister was replaced was replaced by the present cathedral by order of Willem the Conqueror and celebrated its 900 anniversary in 1993.

So I do perhaps, Winchester Cathedral is something

of a regional and national icon. It even has a pop song named after it. Some may have heard of Winchester Cathedral. As an icon I mean that it does rise above denominationalism, above sectarianism, even secularism to be a source of inspiration to people regardless of where they are on their spiritual journey. I think one of the jobs of the dean of Winchester is all the time to realize that you are managing not simply a Christian place of worship but also a sort of spiritual icon which can communicate to all sorts of people across the nation and the visitors who come in large numbers (2.21) from overseas and recently we had the Deputy Chairman of the Chinese Peoples' Assembly for instance. And because Jane Austin is buried there a lot of people come on a literally pill. So many different reasons for coming to the Cathedral. The Cathedral does make its contribution to the world's great religious landmarks as a Christian building, it has a beautiful Roman ask 4 (slide 3) where Christian discipleship begins, it has an exquisite 12th century illuminating Bible (slide 4) to which I shall return in a minute which as well as being a version of the foundation Christian text is also a well treasure. There is a beautifully car studied with the saints who are exemplified of the Christian journey. But all of these treasures are witnesses to the human spiritual question in its broader sense; they witness the beauty, creativity, the human aspiration to reach out on a spiritual journey. There is something here to enable the pillgram to ressignate to the deepest yearnings of the human soul whatever their own religious identity or human story. That's in many ways is captured by a figure in the Roman escript of the cathedral sculptured by the British artist Andy Goley (slide 6). It often stands well above its ankles in water and simply reflects within a stunning environment. One human being reflecting on where humanity is. The water in which the statue stands is the result of the Cathedral being built over a well-located directly over the High Atlar. It could not pre claim eloquently the face in God the creator and

source of all upon which is the premise, the basis, the origin of all religious faiths. My own contribution today is really to go from the Crypt of the Cathedral to share some thoughts on the subject which has been lamentably undervalued by the Christian Churches of the West and has been pressed upon us by the current environmental crisis. It is creation theology and my thesis is straightforwardly this: Creation Theology as the essential basis of interfaith dialogue and mutual respect. If it is true that creation theology is the essential basis of interfaith dialogue and mutual respect then the first step is to go more deeply into each one's tradition in order to grow in respect of the traditions of others. In my case it is to go more deeply into the Judeo Christian tradition and try to understand each witness to God as creator and in this brief reflections I can do no more than seek your indulgence to allow me to share with you where that journey is leading me. An outstanding aspect of the witness of the creation traditions of the Hebrew Scriptures often identified by Christians as the Old Testament is there genuinely universalism. This comes as something of a surprise in dealing with the record of the people of remote significance to international affairs whose primary concern would be their own local identity and destiny under Jehovah. Yet this destiny was set firmly within the context governed by the recognition that their national God was also the universal creator, the mantle of the creator God as come seen throughout the ancient ... fell locally upon Yahoven. The Hebrews shared an understanding with their neighbors which took for granted that universal order was the gift of God and the great miracle of the universe. It was an insight upon which all religion, ethics and knowledge was founded. It was the air which the Ancient Near East breathed and the point is made by the German Theologian Claus Westermann: 'Creation was not an article of faith because there was simply no alternative. In other words, the Old Testament had a different understanding of reality from ours as much as there was no other reality than that established by God. They had no need to expressly believe that the world was created by God because that was a presupposition of their thinking. In other words, whatever the local horizon humans knew themselves as part of something much bigger and more complex. It is the will of the same God who established the local that has been responsible for the whole and given purpose. And that whole is made up by many different landscapes,

societies, languages and religious practices. God's intention cannot be understood apart from that comprehensive overview and that perspective I think its captured for instance by the Prophet Amos: Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arimians from Kia? Israel shared and did not invent this general insight which acknowledged the world as a creation. There was therefore always an awareness that both the universal context and activity of God are facts that this was a shared perspective with the neighbors and the cultural environment that stretch from Mesopotamia to Egypt meant for Israel that not only was the content of the creation message universal but also its form. It arose from an international context which pestered the validity on the claim that God is the universal Creator. There was an insight for which message and message number one Israel's greater context enabled her to reflect on the universal creator as a theological given. We may perhaps push the significance of the particular context and time in history which Israel emerged as far as we can gage the combustion of civilization first took place in the final quarter of the third millennium BCE in the Ancient Near East. Sumer seemed to have the edge hotly pursued by Ancient Egypt. It is in these places we first recognize human capacity enabled by the invention of writing to blossom and complex society with city life, crafts, culture, literature, law and developed religious reflections and practice. It is a world heritage moment and it is that world heritage moment with its first sophisticated reflection on humans within their environment which feeds the Biblical understanding of creation. Dare I say that even in Rome the Hebrews Scriptures leap for the classics and their context within the Ancient Near East enables ... to humanity's primeval youth. That brings to their universalism a particular richness and validity. Further light on the nature of universalism of the Biblical creations tradition becomes evident if we focus on what is known as the primeval history that is Genesis 1-11 the opening chapters of the Hebrew Bible. And here slide 7 would help me. Here is the illustrative first letter of the Bible as found in the Winchester Bible; it is the I of the Latin In Principio; In principle God created the heaven and the earth; in the beginning. And the ornate first letter of Genesis opens these magnificent first eleven chapters of Genesis which include the creation accounts, the flood narrative and conclude with the episode of the Tower of Babel.

Firstly we must note, with Claus Westermann, that the context of the issues raised in the primeval narrative has to be seen in a universal human context, which rises above the cultural and geographical confines even of the ancient Near East. Here are insights that arise spontaneously over different cultures, continents and epochs. There are quite simply universal archetypal human concerns, and Westermann says: "The reflection on creator and creation took place in the context of primeval myths. It was the reflection of a threatened man in a threatened world. The creation myths then have the function of preserving the world and giving security to life". Stefan Paas, more recently, has further clarified Westermann's insight: "therefore, the Biblical creation stories have a previous history in the tradition of human kind. They did not appear out of the blue, but are rooted in what families, generations and nations have handed down since time immemorial".

The flood story illustrated in this slide, from that initial at the beginning of Genesis, can be identified as one of those archetypal narratives that articulates the common human journey. The hero of the biblical flood narrative is Noah, is the 17th Century BCE Mesopotamian version his name is Adrahasis. The sage of the animals taken into the arch to rescue them from the rising flood is a favorite, even of the modern nursery. Westermann argued that the story of a flood spontaneously springs up in different and unrelated cultures and is able to vividly articulate the threatened man in a threatened world. It's of universal coinage, as the billboards across Rome for the latest blockbuster version witness. I'm intrigued that wherever I go in Rome, I can't get away from the flood and Noah.

We may further note a remarkable characteristic of the universalism of the primeval history in Genesis 1-11. It might seem that primeval narrative represents a particularly literary form that operated within its strict own parameters. Genesis 1-11 shares with a cluster of biblical literature known as the Wisdom Tradition a significant integrity. The context of primeval history enables the narrative to reflect in a disciplined and a scientific way, upon a world that is utterly relativized and where there

is no place on the globe that has pressed us over another.

In contrast to the Jerusalem traditions, in Genesis 1-11, there is no primeval universe. According to these chapters of Genesis, all cultures, all languages, all races, all the diversities of humanity are equally distant from God, so there cannot be a special bleeding, no favoring or particular places or circumstances. In a way that is quite remarkable in this context and challenging to those who encountered the primeval history that stands the head of the book of Genesis reflects on human beings in a context in almost laboratory conditions. It is able to hold up in all an analytical way a human couple, brothers, a whole generation and humanity in a highly organized society. It is able to outline the human potential for civilized life and the development of crafts and skills, but at the same time outlines the shadows of humanity that are always universally true.

Genesis 1-11 affords remarkably scrupulous observations of the human condition without any mention related to race, religion and nationality. The significance of those chapters as preface of all the following Hebrew's scriptures cannot be over emphasizes. Those chapters are jewels of great price.

Religion without the proper essence of the creator is dangerous without a corrective. The Hebrew's scriptures open to a magisterial vision of creation that gives no reason to sectarianism, racism or any other grounds of local superiority.

Concentration on the quality of universalism in the Hebrew's scriptures in general and the primeval traditions in particular, leads to my conclusion articulated by the former Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth, Jonathan Sacks, who says "to have faith in God as creator and ruler of the universe is to do more than to believe that God has spoken to us. It is to believe that God has spoken to others in a language, which we may not understand." And that, I submit, is where interfaith dialogue and mutual respect must begin.

Biography

The Very Revd Prof. James Atwell
Head of Winchester Cathedral

Dr. Sheikh Ramzy is first and foremost an Imam and the Director of IQRA Islamic Institute. In addition to this, he is Peace Ambassador for Universal Peace Federation and Chair of the Ed Com Muslim Council of Britain.

Dr Sheikh Ramzy is also founder of the Oxford Islamic Information Center and speaks often of the unity required between Jews, Muslims and other religious communities in the Levant, a region encompassing modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan.

Ramzy has a PhD in Islamic studies from Oxford Brookes University.

"The Arab Spring Opportunities and Threats for ME Peace"

A Lecture by The Hon. Wafik Moustafa, Founder and Chairman of the Conservative Arab Network

Rome; April 3rd, 2014



Hello everybody!

Let me start by saying that faith has been the main ingredient of the Middle East perhaps since the Exodus from Egypt, almost four thousand years ago. Although most of the people claim an Abrahamic link or line of religion, we practice our religion and understand it in different ways, and it is very unfortunate that the way we practice and understand religion has caused so many conflicts in this very region where these originated: the Arab World, the Middle East, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq...

I believe that achieving coexistence is possible, however it has been politicized for centuries, which caused even more conflicts, more damnification, not just between different religions, between Christianity, Judaism, Islam, but actually within religions themselves. I mean, as a Muslim myself I can talk about my religion freely, we have the divisions between Sunni and Shia, Alawites and so on, and I believe in Christianity to some extent, but not as a cue to the Middle Eastern region.

I believe that political and intellectual dialogue is becoming essential to avoid the continued politicization of religion, as religion exist essentially

to bring peace to our souls and our hearts, and that's what it should be.

Recently the Arab world has reached a boiling point and we were presented to what has been called Arab Spring. Despite the difficulties we had during the Arab Spring, a new discourse is coming out, people are talking openly and they are talking about peace. There is not much talk about war as it used to be, much much less than it was, let's say for four or five years ago.

Nonetheless, there is another form of violence coming on. As you know, the civil War in Syria claimed almost two hundred thousand lives and destroyed the infrastructure of the country; in Egypt there have been several thousand killed and many thousand are incarcerated in prisons and these trials we see in television every day, and they had two presidents: Mubarak and President Morsi. It is a tragedy, I personally thought the Arab Spring should have moved the way Eastern Europe had done twenty five years ago, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, by moving into a genuine or some form of liberal democracy, and where the public participation, where the word cultural diplomacy can apply, can feel such huge vacuum and gap.

In our part of the world, particularly, religious leaders often talk about blasphemy, which is used as a weapon of fear. If someone tries to open a free discussion or a free debate, and here I am not talking about Europe, which has gone through huge social and religious change over the last several centuries, I am thinking about where I come from, the Middle East, the Arab World... The Arab Spring hopes were great, and are still great, but I believe the real blasphemy is hate, and instigating hate in the name of God.

When I read Facebook, which I do every day now,

because it gave me a headache to read it every three months or so, I find most comments in Arabic contain religious references, from the Koran or sayings of Mohammad, which really shows that political Islam is alive in some form or another. In many occasions, debating the relationship between liberal democracies and political Islam, I find that political Islamists start by taking the bait, by accepting the principles of democracy as we know it in the West. Sometimes I wonder if saying this kind of thing is political opportunism, short-term strategy, to get through the ballot box in order to enforce the political Islam.

The Arab Spring, which I'm focusing on, has gone into severe turbulence as having a Constitution by itself is not enough. There is no intention - the rulers in the Arab World particularly apply their own rules regardless of what is written on the Constitution, like we all can see in the trial of President Morsi, for example, being in a metal cage, and this metal cage was encapsulated in a glass cage to muffle his voice, and so on... At the end of the day the invent how to go around the system.

Democracy is not difficult to apply on the Middle East. As a matter of fact the first fifty years of the last century we had democracy in Egypt, and actually the Egyptian Constitution of 1923, which was based on the Belgian Constitution, was adopted by Kemal Atatürk in Turkey. The Constitution came to abrupt end in 1952 after the officers' coup against King Farouk. We were supposed to have a better Constitution but we've had what we've had, that ended with the Arab Spring, Human Right abuses, imprisonments, massive destruction of all Institutions.

The Arab Spring, over the last two years, has become a great disappointment and tragedy, and many thousand have been killed. The killings, the destruction, the declaration of Civil War in Syria have endorsed the often discussed Palestinian and Jewish problems. Here are some figures to be clear: Egypt lost 70.000 people over the last sixty years in wars with Israel. Israel lost about 25.000, Palestinian lost about 7.000 and Syrians lost about 3.000, now Syrians have lost about 200.000 fighting each other.

I think we need a new approach to breach this vacuum and gap. Multilateralism will only come through harmonization of State Institutions, and religions need to be harmonized too, it is a State Institution and therefore it is no different. It is indeed the most important single factor in what's happening now, and it affects the mind sets of many of us in the Middle East. To achieve objective change it needs some form of reformation, which is what a lot of people in the Middle East hate to be mentioned. It has been blocked by regimes and Islamist alike, it's not only Islamist because they work hand in hand.

What I feel is that we need a new face, a new change, we need young people to talk, we need an opening to the world. We don't need political religious discourse, it's not easy to stop it but I think it can be dealt with in a peaceful way by first opening the psyche and letting people speak out, discuss freely about what is happening.

Another big problem in the Arab World is the interference between Arab Countries into one another. For example, making the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization is, in my view, not supporting Political Islam at all and it's not going to help. It's going to be counterproductive, will push them under the ground and will probably cause a lot of resentment in that sector of society. Unfortunately the media is not fair, the media is a mouthpiece of a certain regime and a certain sector. The media in the Middle East is owned by the people who are attached to regimes or owned by the State itself, so there is not free media in the sense we see it in the west. I appear in the media a lot of times and I know their sources and I know their agendas and it frightens me a lot. But I don't have any choice. If I don't appear there I won't have any platform to speak on. But I keep my independence most of the time.

I think I will stop here and take questions...

Thank you very much.

Biography

The Hon. Wafik Moustafa Head of Winchester Cathedral

Wafik Moustafa was born in Cairo, Egypt and has lived most of his adult life in Britain. He is a GP and a British Politician. He is Patron of Children's Leukaemia Global Foundation and he is the founder and Chairman of the Conservative Arab Network.

Moustafa has been an active member of the Conservative Party for 23 years and was the first Egyptian-born British national to stand for UK Parliamentary General Elections as candidate for Bootle, Liverpool in 2005.

He is also the founder and current Chairman of the Conservative Arab Network (CAN), an affiliate of the UK Conservative Party. Previously Moustafa was politically active at Bassetlaw Conservative Association.

In 2011 Moustafa led a Parliamentary Delegation to Cairo, Egypt, the first of its kind made up of Lords, MPs and senior political figures. The Delegation met with the Supreme Military Council; The Grand Sheikh of Azhar; and other political figures and leaders from a variety of political, youth and social organizations. The purpose of the visit was to find ways to engage with Egypt during their time of challenge and major crisis with the view of encouraging democracy and social change. The visit gave British politicians a chance to directly engage with Egyptians on many levels of society. Work is currently being undertaken on a similar Parliamentary Delegation to Tunisia and other Arab countries in the near future.



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Former President of Croatia



Senator Ivana Simeoni
Member of the Italian Senate



MP Marta Grande
Member of the Italian Parliament



Senator Linda Lanzillotta
Vice President of the Italian Senat



Bishop Fülöp Kocsis
Bishop of the Diocese Hajdudorog, Hungary



Sen. Lucio Malan
Member of the Italian Senate

Interviews



Dr. Paul Jacob Bhatti
Former Minister of National Harmony and Minority Affairs of Pakistan



President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero
Former President of Spain



MP Reinhold Lopatka
Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of the Austrian People's Party in the National Council



H.E. Amb. Mirko Jelic
Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the Holy See



Claudia Bandion-Ortner
Secretary General, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue



His Eminence Sultan Muhammad Saad Abubakar
Sultan of Sokoto and President General, Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic affairs

Interviews



H. E. Amb. August Parengkuan
Ambassador of Indonesia to Italy



H.E. Amb. Lars-Hjalmar Wide
Ambassador of Sweden to the Holy See



Vášáryová Magdaléna
Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic



Auxiliary Bishop Pablo Virgilio S. David
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Senator Mihai Razvan Ungureanu
Member of Romanian Senate, Former Prime Minister of Romania



H.E Maroun Laham
Patriarchal Vicar for Jordan of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Interviews



Rev. Olivier Reigen Wang Genh
Vice President, Buddhist Union of France



President Angelo (Anġlu) Farrugia
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Akhmed Tamim
Mufti of Ukraine



His Eminence Husein ef. Kavazovic
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