

THE CHALLENGES AND PROMISE OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Nostra ætate 50 Years Later:
Where We Have Come From
Where We Are
Where We Hope to Go

April 13, 2016 7-8:30pm
Pasadena California, Holy Family Church
William Skudlarek OSB

This evening's presentation

- *Nostra ætate*: Its history and significance
 - 50th anniversary international conference
- Precursors and Pioneers
- John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue
- Monastic Interreligious Dialogue
 - Dialogue with monks
 - Dialogue with Muslims
- Catholics and Muslims in Dialogue

NOSTRA ÆTATE
DECLARATION ON THE RELATION OF THE
CHURCH TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

PROCLAIMED BY HIS HOLINESS
POPE PAUL VI
OCTOBER 28, 1965

NOSTRA ÆTATE

- Not on the original agenda of the Council
- Originally proposed as a document on the Church’s relation to the Jewish people
 - John XXIII and Jules Isaac
- Gradually expanded to include the Church’s relation to other major religions
- Shortest of all the conciliar documents—just over 1500 words (LG 27,000; GS 33,500)
- Perhaps the most revolutionary: From “anathema” to “dialogue and collaboration”
- Precursors and Pioneers

Precursor



Saint Francis of Assisi
1182-1226

Audience with the
Sultan of Egypt,
Malik-al-Kamil,
in 1219

Precursor



Matteo Ricci
1552-1610

Jesuit missionary to
China

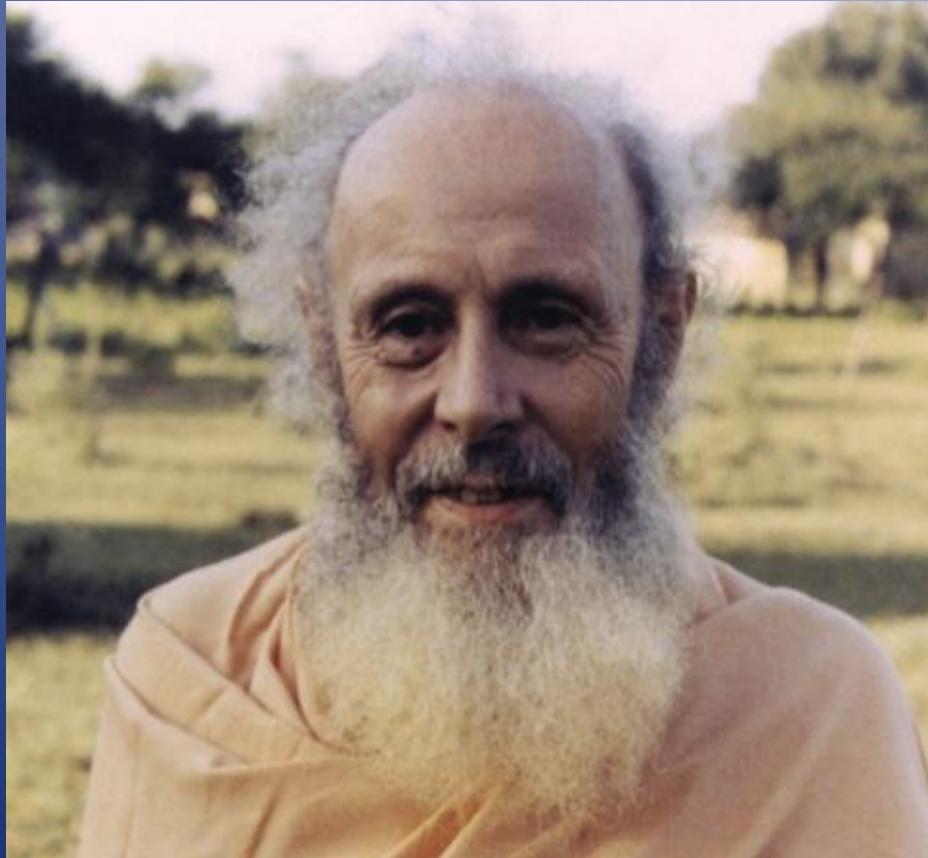
Pioneer Hinduism



Jules Monchanin

1895-1957

Pioneer Hinduism



Henri Le Saux OSB
(Abhisiktananda)

1910-1973

Pioneer Buddhism



Hugo-Enomiya Lasalle SJ
1898-1990
Japan

Pioneer Buddhism



Edmond Pezet
1923-2008
Thailand

Pioneer Islam



Charles de Foucauld
1858-1916

Pioneer Islam



Louis Massignon

1883-1962

DECLARATION ON
THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH
TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS
NOSTRA ÆTATE

“The Church, therefore, exhorts her children, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these people” (2:3).

International Conference

Rome, October 26-28, 2015





“We give thanks for the witness of the followers of other religions who, by sharing with us their search for what is of ultimate value, help us and all Christians in our search for God.”

Papal General Audience

October 28, 2015



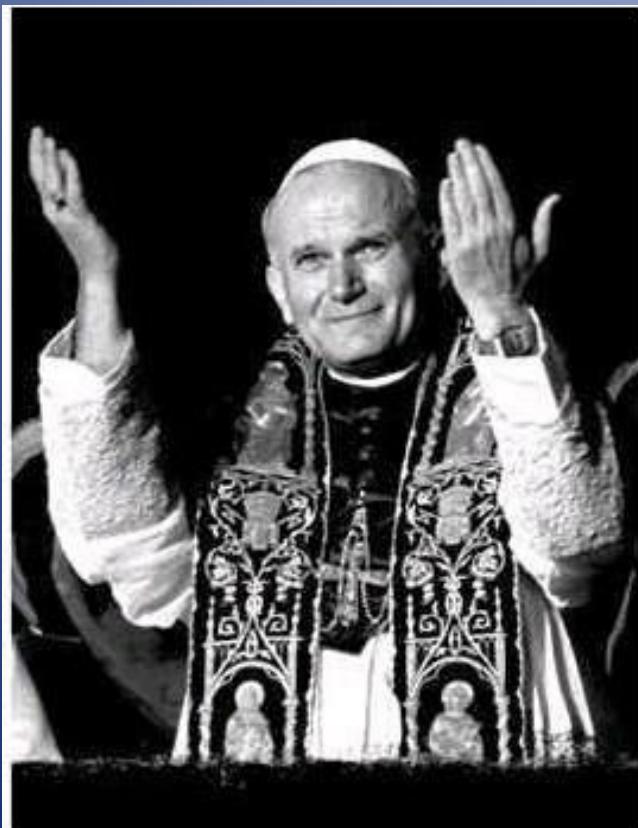
Buddhist/Catholic Dialogue

Rome, June 24, 2915



The Example and Teaching of Saint John Paul II

October 16, 1978
Election



March 30, 2005
Last Public Appearance



“Followers of God”

Dolores Puthod

Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue



Eight Meetings with the Dalai Lama



Manila, 21 February 1981

Radio Veritas Asia



“The Catholic Church . . . wishes to do everything possible to cooperate with other believers in preserving all that is good in their religions and cultures.”

Tokyo, 24 February 1981

Speech to Representatives of Non-Christian Religions



*“You are the heirs
and guardians of a
venerable wisdom. .
. I am happy that
God has entrusted
these gifts to you.”*

Kaduna, Nigeria

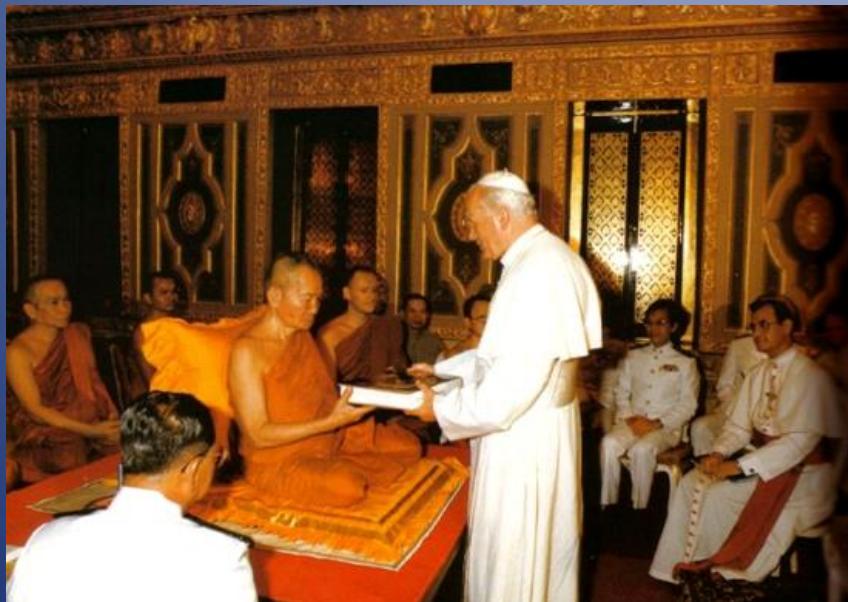
14 February 1982

“All of us, Christians and Muslims, live under the sun of the one merciful God. We both believe in one God who is the Creator of Man. We acclaim God’s sovereignty and we defend man’s dignity as God’s servant. We adore God and profess total submission to him. *Thus, in a true sense, we can call one another brothers and sisters in faith in the one God.*”



Thailand, 10 May 1984

Greeting the Buddhist Patriarch— and then Preaching to Catholics



“The majority of your fellow citizens embrace Buddhism . . . as people of Thailand you are heirs of the *ancient and venerable wisdom contained therein.*”

—*From Pope John Paul's homily later that day*

Ecuador, 31 January 1985

Speech to the Indigenous Peoples



“Four hundred years ago the Christian faith arrived in this land. But even before that, without your suspecting it, God was present enlightening your path. . . .”

Morocco, 19 August 1985

Speech to Young Muslims



“I believe that, today, God invites us *to change our old practices* [of polemics and wars]. We must respect each other, and . . . stimulate each other in good works.”

Visit to the Synagogue of Rome

13 April 1986



“Each of our religions,
in full awareness of the
many ties that bind us
to one another . . .
wishes to be
recognized and
respected in its own
identity.”

World Day of Prayer for Peace

Assisi, 27 October 1986



Speech to the Roman Curia

22 December 1986

“By showing the Catholic Church hand in hand with her Christian brothers and sisters, and by showing all of us hand in hand with our brothers and sisters of other religions, Assisi gave expression to our conviction, inculcated by the Second Vatican Council, that the human family is one in its origin and final goal, and that non-Christian religions have meaning and value.”

Speech to the Roman Curia

22 December 1986 (2)

Every authentic prayer is inspired by the Holy Spirit, who “helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (Rom 8: 26-27).

Bamaka (Mali), 28 January 1990

Speech to the Bishops of Mali



“It is time to encourage close attention to the values [of traditional African religions] . . . in order to recognize what may be an integral part of the common good.”

Manila, 15 January 1995

Speech to the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences



“Interreligious dialogue . . . must reach to the grass-roots, correcting misunderstandings which communities have of one another, and fostering solidarity in the building of a more just and human society.”

New Delhi, 7 November 1999

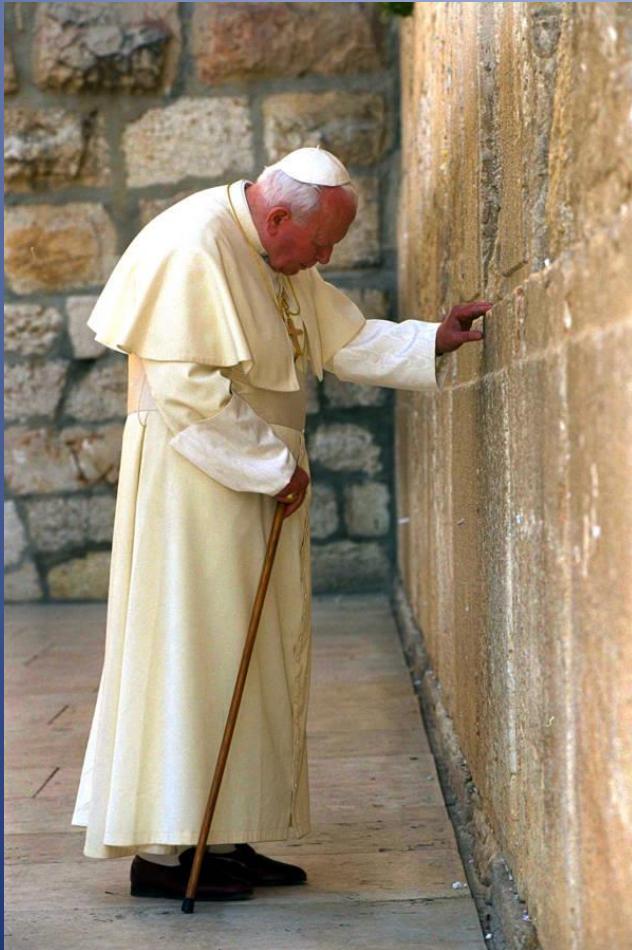
Speech at an Interreligious Meeting



“Dialogue is never an attempt to impose our own views upon others. . . . Holding firmly to what we believe, we listen respectfully to others, seeking to discern all that is good and holy, all that favours peace and cooperation.”

Jerusalem, Western Wall

26 March 2000



God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring Your name to the nations: we are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of Yours to suffer and asking Your forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant.

Joannes Paulus II

Damascus, 6 May 2001

Omayyad Great Mosque



“Better mutual understanding will surely lead, at the practical level, to a new way of presenting our two religions *not in opposition*, as has happened too often in the past, *but in partnership for the good of the human family.*”

From Gemelli Hospital, 11 March 2005 To Tanzanian Bishops on their *ad limina*



“A serious commitment to inter-religious dialogue . . . will give a shining example to other nations of the harmony that should always exist between diverse ethnic and religious groups.”

Dialogue Interreligieux Monastique
Monastic Interreligious Dialogue

DIM
HOL
MID

Spiritual Exchange with Japanese Zen Buddhists



John Paul II, 9 September 1987

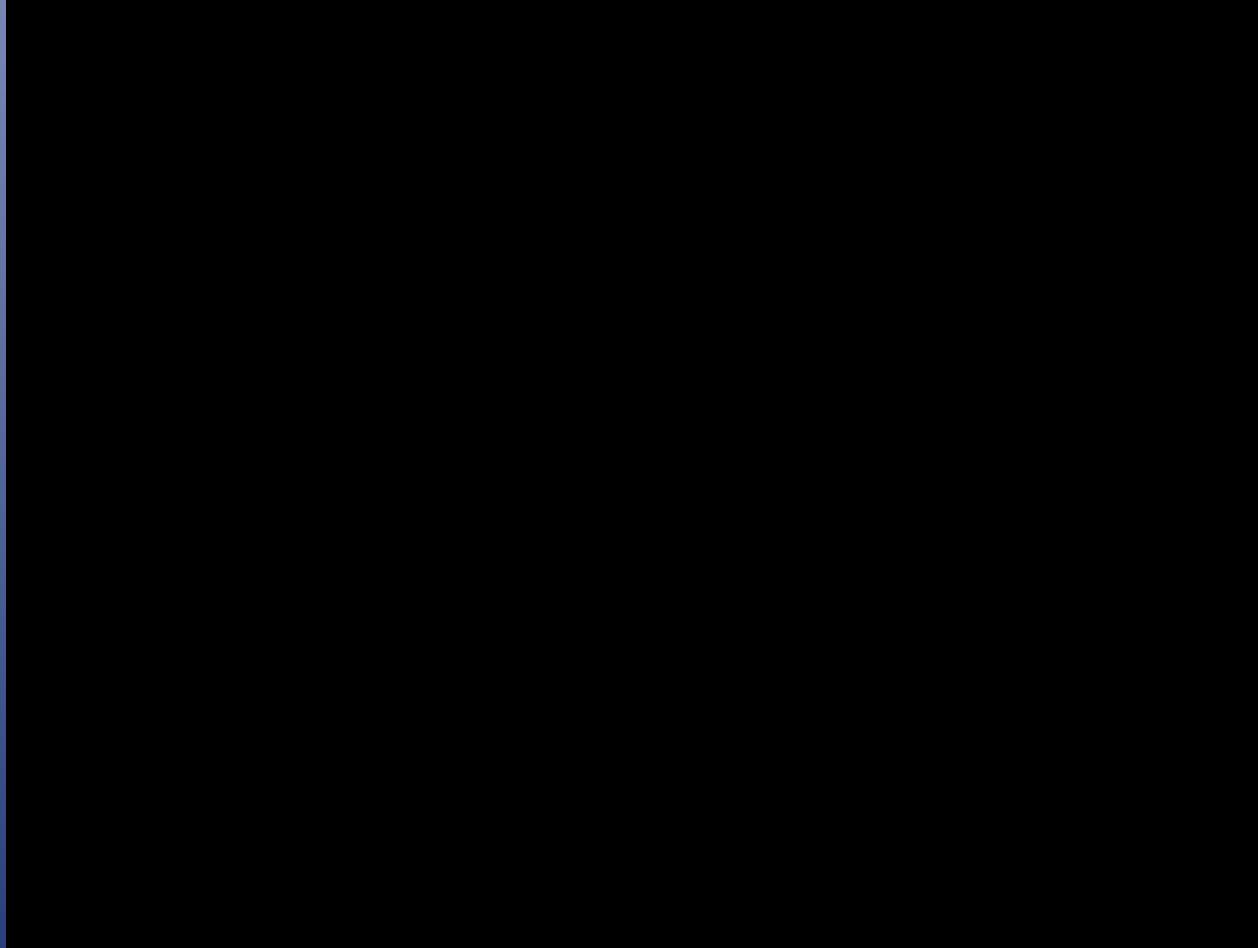
East-West Spiritual Exchange



“There is much you can do through *hospitality*. . . . a meeting of mind and heart can take place, a meeting characterized by a shared sense of brotherhood in the one human family that opens the way for ever deeper spiritual dialogue.”

Enkakuji Buddhist Monastery

Kamakura, Japan, 2014



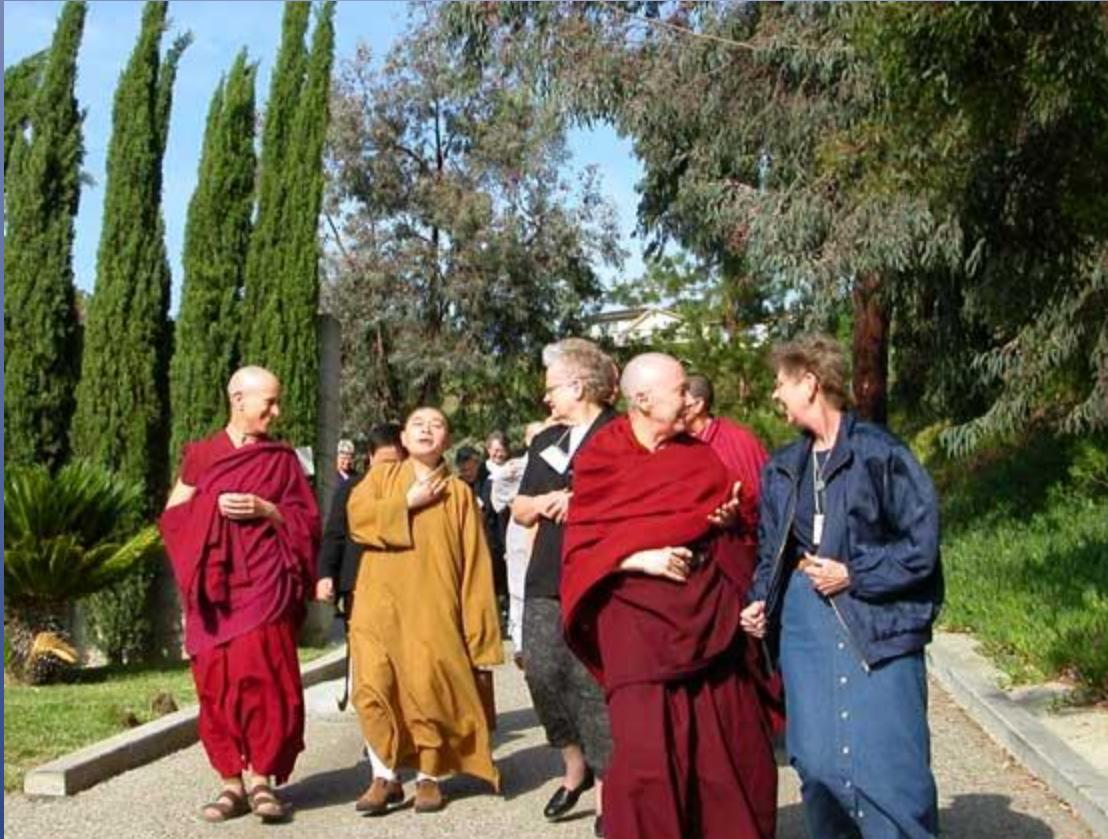
Gethsemani Encounters

1996, 2002, 2008, 2016



Nuns in the West (2003)

Hsi Lai Temple, Hacienda Heights



Monks in the West (2004)

City of 10,000 Buddhas, Ukiah



A journal of the dialogue of spiritual experience

DILATATO CORDE

Une revue du dialogue de l'expérience spirituelle

www.dimmid.org

Hospitality and Friendship



Monastic Dialogue with Muslims



“Even though there are no monks in Islam, they have a deeply spiritual practice, with the presence of a master, the discipline of fasting, a daily “Liturgy of the Hours,” and a tradition of reading of the Qur'an with great devotion. Since their spiritual practices are very similar to ours, we wanted to enter into dialogue with this aspect of Islam.”

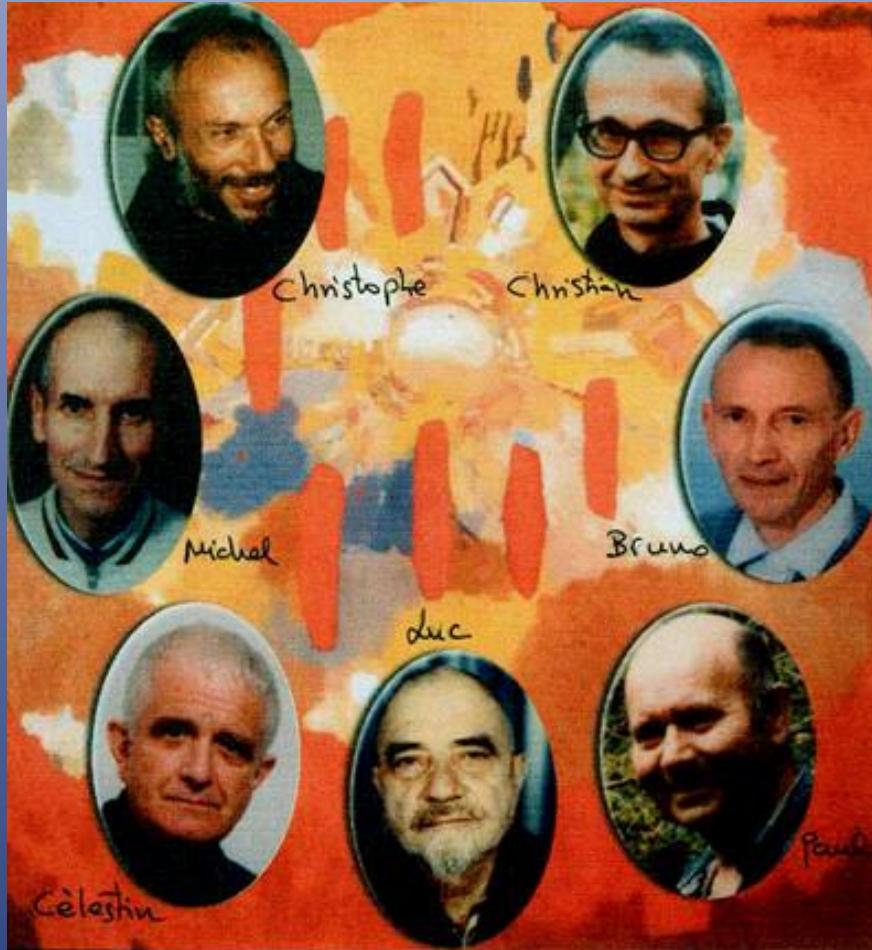
Daniel Pont OSB

The Monastic (Trappist) Community at Tibhirine, Algeria



Kidnapped 26–27 March 1996

Killed 21 May 1996



Christian de Chergé OCSO

1937-1996



Ribât es Salâm

The Bond of Peace



“Des hommes et des dieux”



LAMBERT WILSON

MICHAEL LONSDALE

OF GODS AND MEN

A FILM BY XAVIER BEAUVOIS



“A LUMINOUS TALE.”

- Richard Corliss, TIME MAGAZINE

“A MOVING, HUMANE DRAMA.”

- A.O. Scott, THE NEW YORK TIMES

“SUBERB. NOTHING LESS THAN SUBLIME.”

- Joe Morgenstern, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



“SUPERB! THIS MAY STIR VIEWERS TO AN AWE THAT TRANSCENDS SKEPTICAL OPINIONS ABOUT RELIGION OR POLITICS.”

-Lisa Schwarzbaum, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

“A MASTERPIECE! GO SEE THIS RAPTUROUS MOVIE! THE CAST IS DIVINE.”

-David Germain, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Christian de Chergé

*“To speak of God in another way
is not to speak of another God.”*

- « Mais voir les choses différemment ne signifie pas qu'on ne voit pas les mêmes choses. De même, quand Dieu se dit autrement, il ne se dit pas autre, mais Tout-Autre, c'est-à-dire autrement que tous les autres » (*L'invincible espérance*, p. 127).

Last Will and Testament of Christian de Chergé

“My death, clearly, will appear to justify those who hastily judged me naïve, or idealistic: ‘Let him tell us now what he thinks of it!’ But these must realize that my avid curiosity will then be satisfied. This is what I shall be able to do, if God wills—immerse my gaze in that of the Father, and contemplate with him his children of Islam just as he sees them, all shining with the glory of Christ, the fruit of His Passion, and filled with the Gift of the Spirit, whose secret joy will always be to establish communion and to refashion the likeness, playfully delighting in the differences.”

Dom Christian's Last Will and Testament

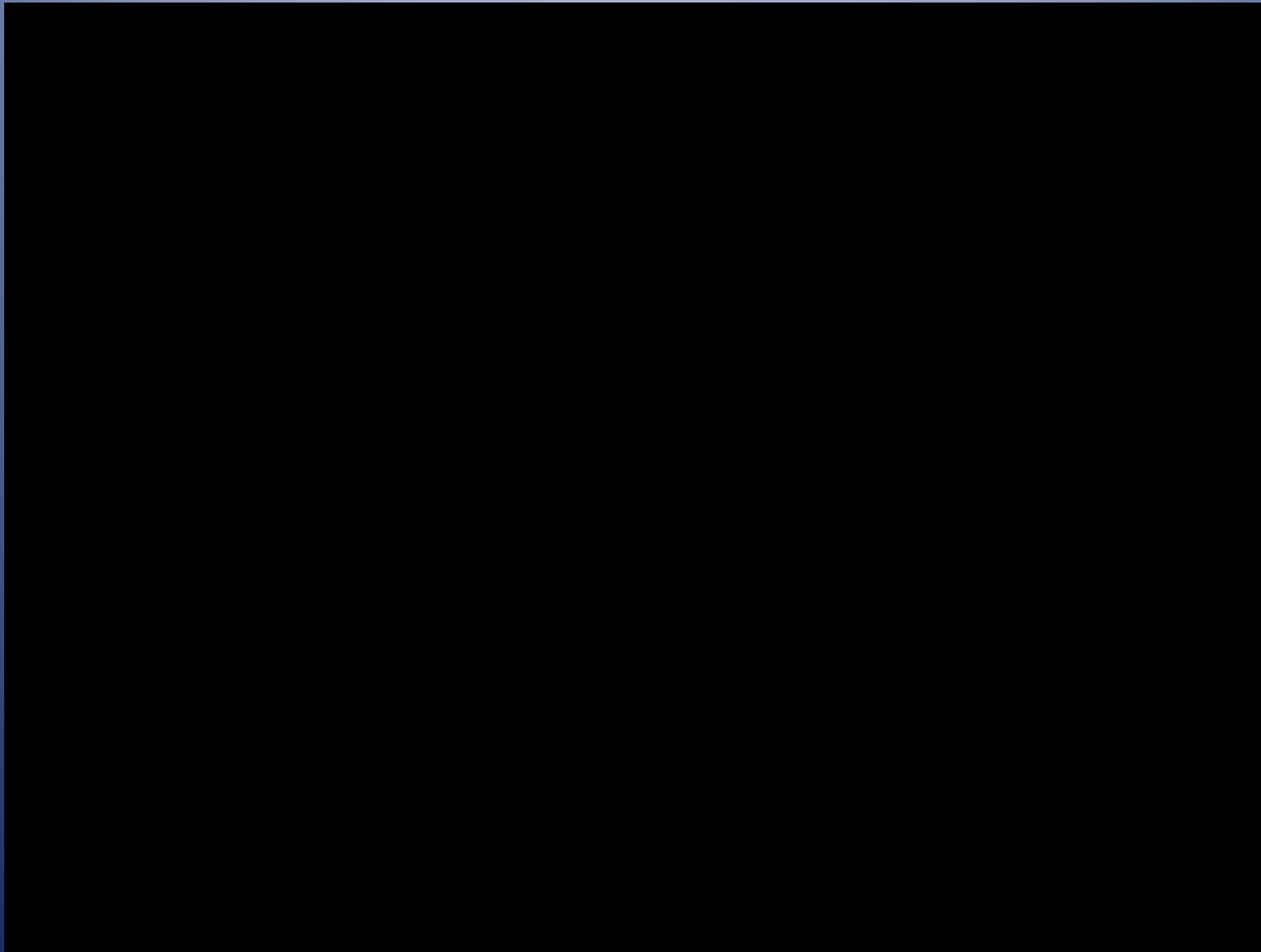
Quand un A-DIEU s'envisage...

S'il m'arrivait un jour - et ça pourrait être aujourd'hui - d'être victime du terrorisme qui semble vouloir englober maintenant tous les étrangers vivant en Algérie, j'aimerais que ma communauté, mon Église, ma famille, se souviennent que ma vie était DONNÉE à Dieu et à ce pays. Qu'ils acceptent que le Maître Unique de toute vie ne saurait être étranger à ce départ brutal. Qu'ils prient pour moi: comment serais-je trouvé digne d'une telle offrande ?

When an “A-DIEU” is envisaged. . .

If it should happen one day—and it could be today—that I become a victim of the terrorism which now seems ready to engulf all the foreigners living in Algeria, I would like my community, my Church, my family, to remember that my life was GIVEN to God and to this country. I ask them to accept that the Sole Master of all life was not a stranger to this brutal departure. I ask them to pray for me—for how could I be found worthy of such an offering?

Tibhirine and Midelt



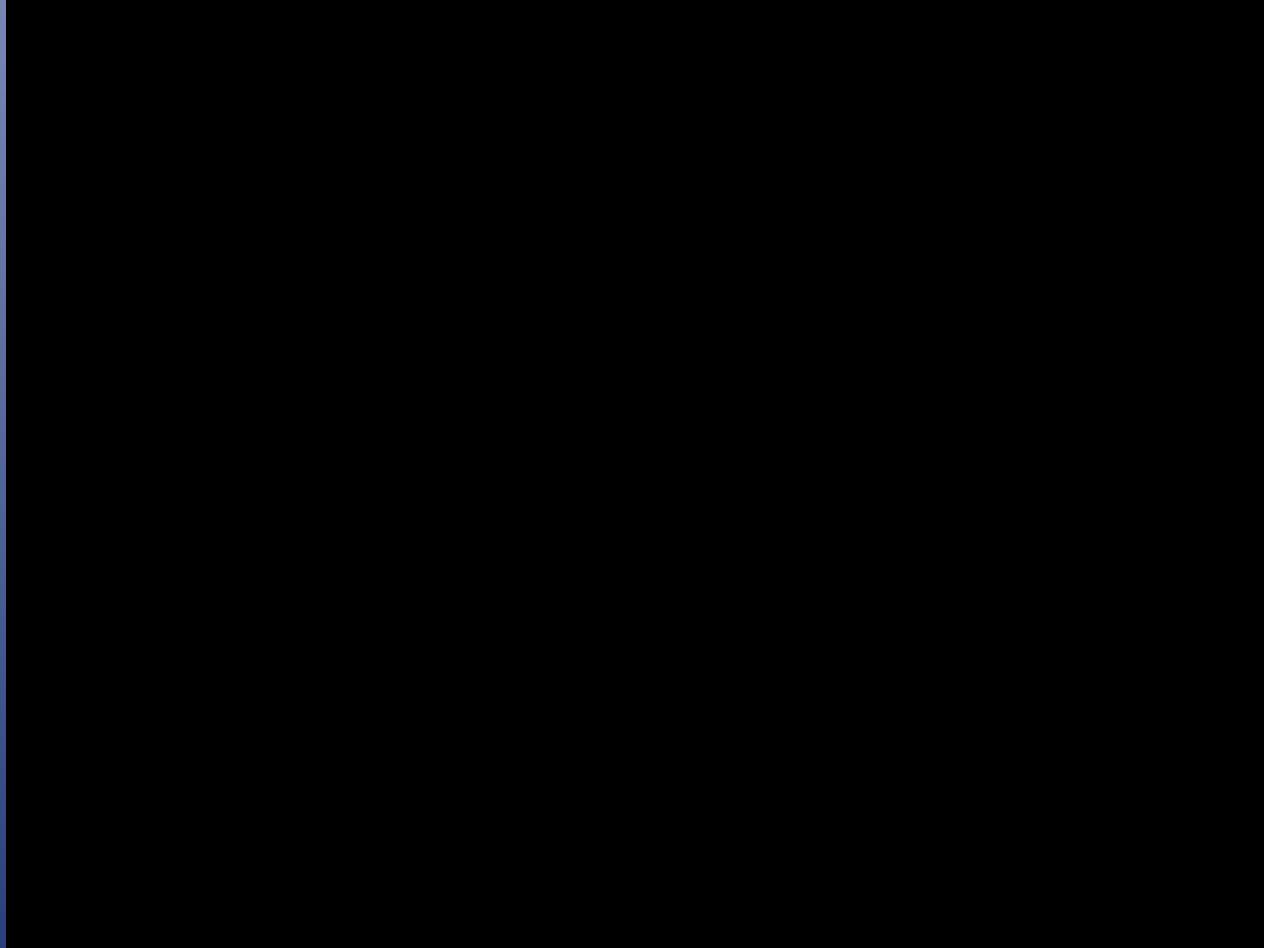
Benedictines and Muslims

Belgium, United States



European DIMMID Commissions

Sheikh Bentounès, Sufi Master



International Dialogue with Iranian Shi'a Muslims

2011 Rome: Monastic and Shi'a
Spirituality in Dialogue

2012 Qom, Iran: Creating
Communities of Friendship

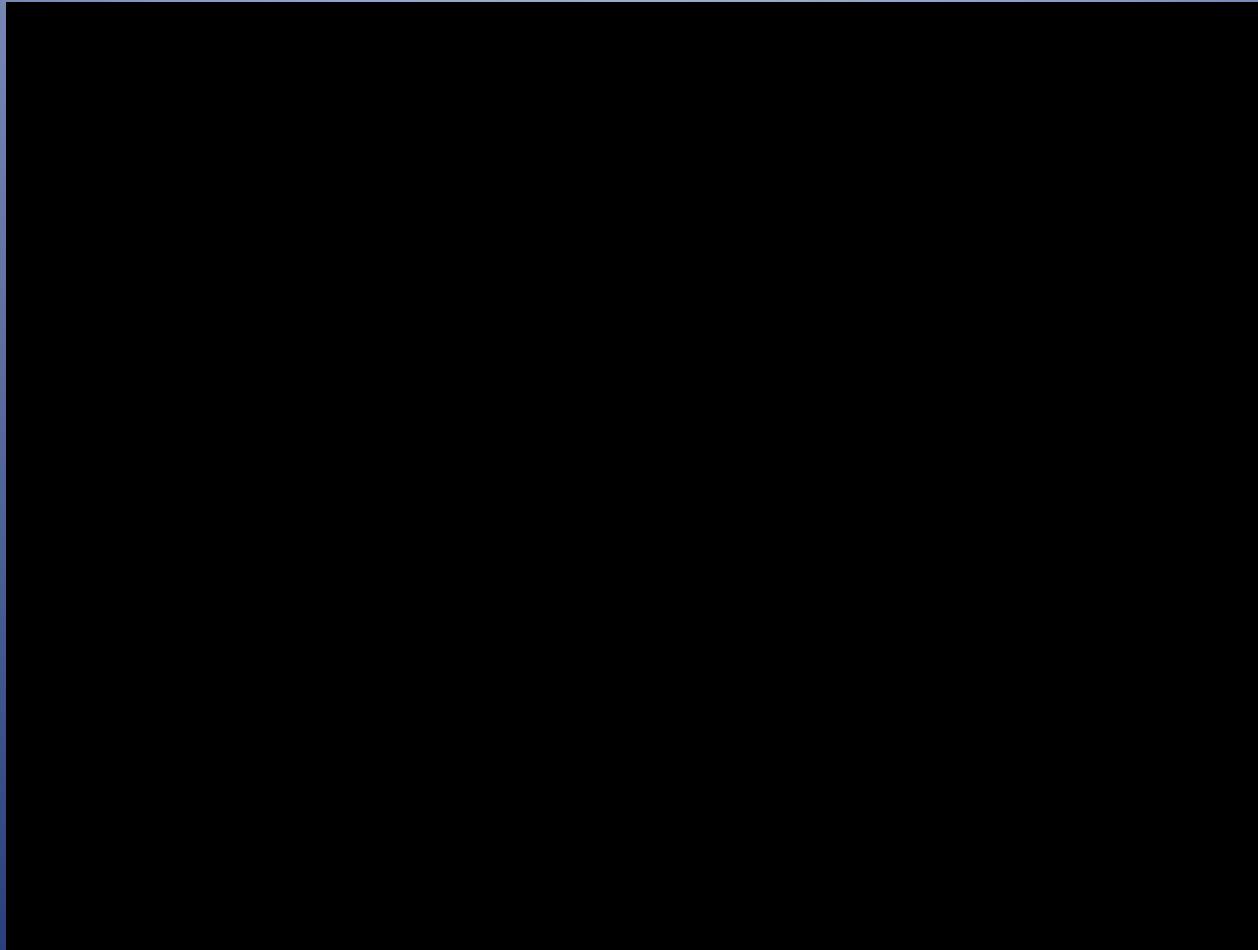
2014 Assisi: Towards a Global
Abrahamic Community

2016, Qom: Human Dignity and
Human Rights



Godefroy Raguenet de Saint-Albin

Mohammad Ali Shomali



Christianity and Islam

The Road Ahead



Resources



- Scholars, activists, and community leaders from various religious and cultural backgrounds address Islamophobia as it exists within the United States today.
- [Website: Knowledge Base](#)

Catholic Bishops of Canada

The cover features a stylized cross on the left and the title 'A Church in Dialogue' in large red letters. Below it is the subtitle 'Catholics and Muslims in Canada: Believers and Citizens in Society'. A small green banner at the bottom right reads 'The Episcopal Conference of Canadian Catholic Bishops - Conference des évêques catholiques du Canada - The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops - Conference canadienne des évêques catholiques - CCCB - Conference of Canadian Bishops'.

II Why do Catholics need to know about Islam?

As stated by Vatican officials in 2007: "Muslims and Christians together make up over half the world's population. Millions more non-practicing Christians than non-religious consumers may there can be no oversight peace in the world. The future of the world depends on peace between Christianity and Islam" (in Common Final Document [p. 10 and 11], 2007).

Christianity has about 2.3 billion followers, and about half of all Christians are Catholic. Islam is a world religion with an estimated 1.8 billion followers.

Muslims are our neighbour and our co-workers. Hence the number of Muslim immigrants to Canada is increasing. It is even more important to know Islam better so as to foster intercultural and religious social understanding.

III What are the origins of Islam?

Islam began with a man named Muhammad, who was born in 570 AD in the town of Mecca in Arabia (present Saudi Arabia). Muhammad, who was orphaned at a young age, was sent out for relatives especially to his uncle, Abu Talib, who raised him as his son.

Part I

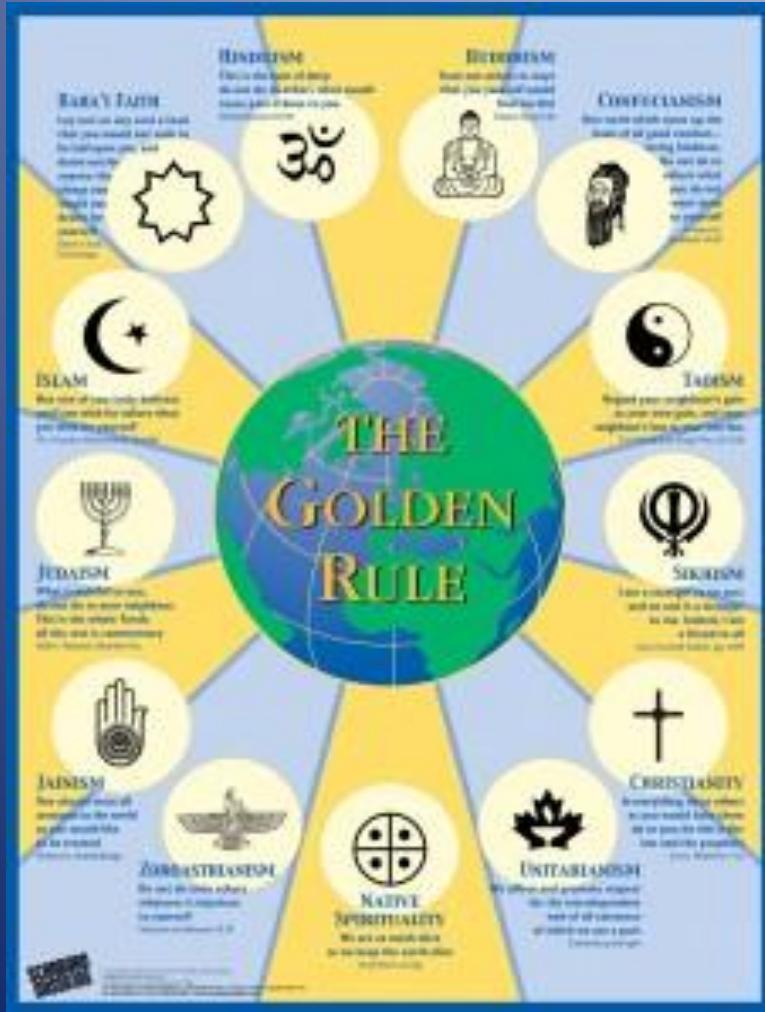
- Origins of Islam
- Contemporary currents
- Similarities with and differences from Christianity

Part II

- History and present state of dialogue

[PDF on line](#)

Scarboro Foreign Mission Society



Principles and Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue

Where We Hope to Go

“Better mutual understanding will surely lead, at the practical level, to a new way of presenting our two religions *not in opposition*, as has happened too often in the past, *but in partnership for the good of the human family*.”

- -John Paul II, Speech at the Omayyad Great Mosque Damascus on 6 May 2001

Dialogue . . .

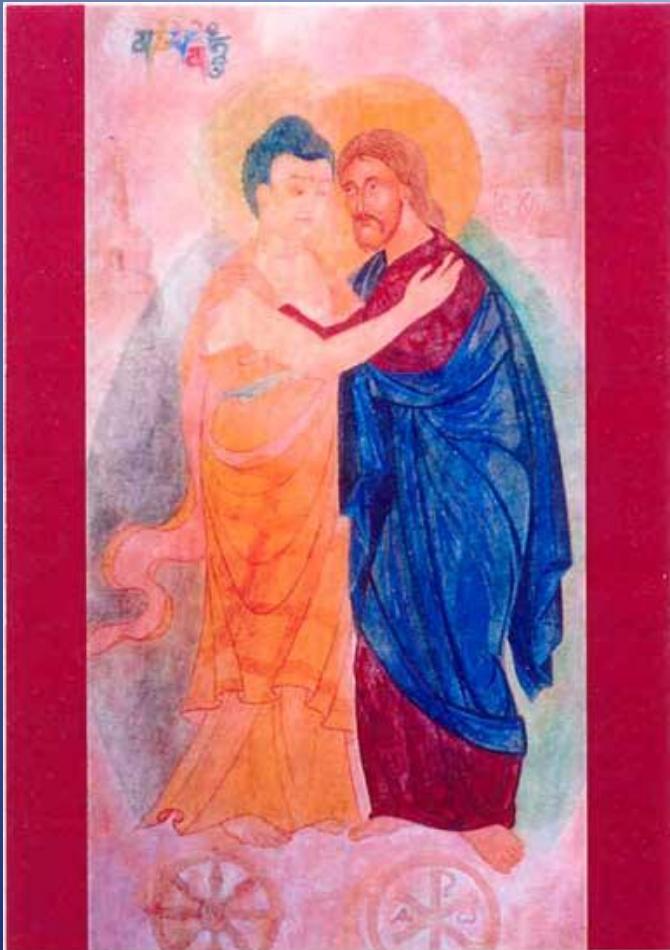
- is not between religions but between religious people
- is not apologetics
- does not compare our best with their worst
- does not equate being different with being wrong 違います
- proceeds through friendship (Sant'Egidio)
- works best with first-person language
- leads to and follows from collaboration

POST-SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION

“Amoris Laetitia”

- “Be ready to listen patiently and attentively to everything the other person wants to say. This requires the self-discipline of not speaking until the time is right.”
- “Develop the habit of giving real importance to the other person. This means appreciating them and recognizing their right to exist, to think as they do and to be happy. Never downplay what they say or think, even if you need to express your own point of view.”
- "Keep an open mind. Don't get bogged down in your own limited ideas and opinions, but be prepared to change or expand them. The combination of two different ways of thinking can lead to a synthesis that enriches both."

The Englightened One and the Anointed one



The meeting of Buddhism and Christianity will come to be viewed as the most important event in modern history.

- Arnold Toynbee

Their meeting is the hope for the world.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

Icon: Br. Richard Maidwell CSSR