

Columban Resources for the Golden Rule Poster

With sacred texts from thirteen different religions and traditions, the Australian version of *The Golden Rule Poster* is a very effective resource for building better relations across ethnic, cultural and religious divides in our multi-cultural, multi-religious Australian society.

Promoting *The Golden Rule Poster* is a project of the *Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations*. We are confident it will be a great resource for promoting better interfaith relations all around Australia.

In the following pages we present some ideas on how you can use *The Golden Rule Poster* in homes, classrooms, places of worship, offices and workplaces for promoting peace, harmony and mutual respect between people of different cultures and religions.

Since the *Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations* is an entity of *St Columbans Mission Society*, an international missionary organization of the Roman Catholic Church, we present these ideas in the context of the Catholic Church's teaching on interreligious dialogue. However, we also reference the peak national organizations of other Christian Churches and of other religions, as well as some of the more prominent interreligious agents in our society.

The staff members of the *Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations* are ready to assist you by providing speakers, resources or simply someone with whom to bounce ideas around! Please do get in touch. We look forward to hearing how you are advancing Australia as a fair, peaceful, harmonious and just society based on the *Golden Rule*.

Rev. Dr. Patrick McInerney

Director, Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations

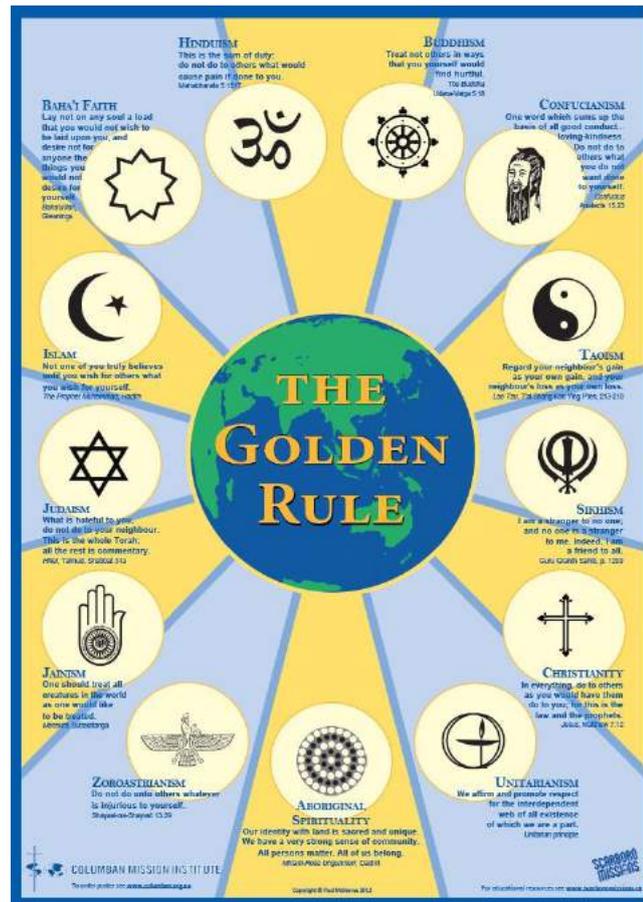


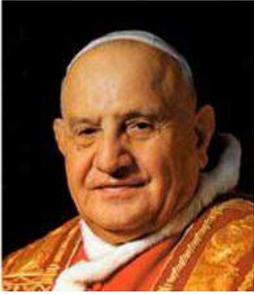


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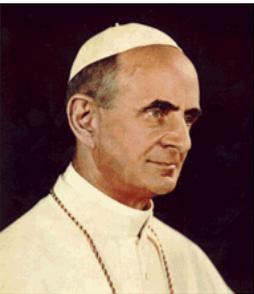
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The Popes: Catholic Pioneers of interreligious Dialogue



As Apostolic Delegate to Turkey, Giuseppe Roncalli used his diplomatic office to help save the lives of thousands of Jews. As **Pope John XXIII**, he called the *Second Vatican Council* which marked a positive transformation in the Church's attitude towards the world and other religions. [Nostra Aetate](#) is the *Magna Carta* of the Church's relations with believers from other faiths.



Pope Paul VI introduced the word "*dialogue*" into the teaching of the Catholic Church in his 1963 encyclical [Ecclesiam Suam](#). His vision of all peoples being related to the Church influenced the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council. During his 1964 visit to India his warm greetings to the religious leaders set a precedent for subsequent papal practice.



Pope John Paul I: "We greet also with reverence and affection all the people in the world. We regard them and love them as our brothers and sisters, since they are children of the same heavenly Father and brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus (cf. Mt 23:8f)."



Pope John Paul II had Jewish childhood friends who disappeared in the Holocaust but were never forgotten. In their memory, during his long papacy he transformed the Church's attitude to Jews by his teaching on interreligious relations (e.g. [Redemptoris Missio](#)) and his deeds. His visit to the Roman Synagogue on 13 April 1986 is the first recorded papal visit to a Synagogue. He invited all the religious leaders of the world to *Assisi for a Day of Prayer for Peace* on 27 October 1986. On 6 May 2001 in Damascus he became the first Pope ever to enter a Mosque.



Pope Benedict XVI: "*Interreligious and intercultural dialogue between Christians and Muslims cannot be reduced to an optional extra. It is in fact a vital necessity, on which in large measure our future depends.*" Cologne, 20 August 2005



Five Types of Dialogue



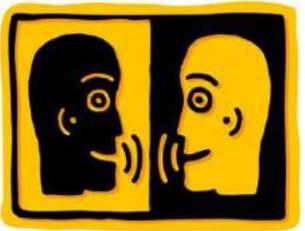
1. **Dialogue of Life:** Living an open and neighborly spirit, sharing joys and sorrows, human concerns, showing respect, kindness and hospitality.

The Dialogue of Life



2. **Dialogue of Action:** Collaborating on humanitarian, social, economic, political or ecological matters on the basis of shared common values.

The Dialogue of Hands



3. **Dialogue of Theological Exchange:** Discussing religious doctrines and practices to come to a better mutual understanding and appreciation of the truths and values believers share as well as a more precise knowledge of matters about which they differ.

The Dialogue of the Head



4. **Dialogue of Religious Experience:** Sharing one's experiences of spirituality, prayer, contemplation and ways of approach to God.

The Dialogue of the Heart



5. **Dialogue of Friendship:** Having come to know and appreciate one another through one or more of the above dialogues and become friends, simply enjoying each other's company.

The Dialogue of Friendship



Dialogue Happens at All Levels

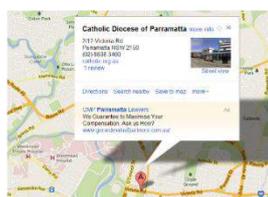
N.B. While this presentation is from a Catholic perspective, there are similar bodies in other Churches and in other religions.

Parish



Where Catholics live, study and work side-by-side with believers from other religions in one or more of the four ways of dialogue mentioned on the previous page. The communion Catholics experience in the Eucharist sends us out to be part of God's mission of building communion with all people across the boundaries of culture, religion and race.

Diocese



A Commission is made up of representatives and advisers from the diocese. Their task is to foster relations between people of different religions, especially their local leaders - priests, rabbis, imams and bishops - along with their respective congregations. They provide formation, resources and encouragement for Catholics engaged in dialogue. They are the point of contact for leaders and believers from other religions. They facilitate interfaith and multi-faith encounters and events e.g. multi-religious services for important civic occasions and in times of natural disasters.

National



The [Bishops Commission for Ecumenism and Interreligious Relations](#) facilitates relations between the national leaders of different churches and religions to promote mutual understanding. They also coordinate joint religious responses to pressing social and national issues

e.g. representation to the government on matters of shared religious and moral concern.

Regional



Single or multi-faith delegations from one country visit multi-faith gatherings and forums in other countries e.g. Europe, Asia, the Pacific, the Americas. They promote interreligious cooperation and collaboration on issues that are common to the region e.g. the contribution of religions to promote freedom, human dignity, environmental concerns or to counter extremism.

International



The Vatican department that oversees the Church's relations with believers from other religions and the Catholic response to the challenges of religious plurality is the [Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue](#). They provide formation and teaching for Catholics. They advise the Pope, the Vatican bureaucracy and local churches on matters of interreligious concern. They are the point of contact and engagement on interfaith matters with other Churches, the World Council of Churches and other religions. They host delegations at the Vatican, visit other religious leaders in other countries and participate in international dialogue events.



Stories and Quotes

When I first went to Pakistan I attended a language school to learn Urdu, the national language. One of my teachers had learnt his teaching craft from his father. Both men spent their entire lives in that same school teaching Urdu so that Christian missionaries could live and do their missionary work in Pakistan. What is astonishing is that both men were devout Muslims. Their dedication and service is in direct contrast to the popular stereotype of Muslims as violent, dangerous terrorists! (related by Columban Father Patrick McInerney)

Many years ago a New York Jewish congregation had provided clothing for needy families. Sheikh Moussa Drammeh had received some for his congregants. Later, after many years of declining numbers, the Jewish congregation had to sell its property and could not afford to rent. Hearing of their plight, the Sheikh offered to accommodate them. As a result, the Jewish members of the Chabad of East Bronx, an ultra-Orthodox synagogue, now worship in the Islamic Cultural Center of North America which is home to the Al-Iman Mosque in New York. *"We are able to co-exist together side by side in the same building,"* said Assistant Rabbi Avi Friedman, 42. *"That's sort of like a taste of the future world to come - the messianic future where all people live in peace."* (reported in *Tablet* magazine, USA)

The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. It has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from its own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women. Yet it proclaims and is in duty bound to proclaim without fail, Christ who is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 1:6). (Nostra Aetate, 2)

I was part of a joint Christian-Muslim delegation on a study tour in Turkey. Our Australian Muslim tour guide was taking a long time to confirm our accommodation. When he eventually appeared, he told me that he had exchanged my hotel room for his because my room had a low beam on which I might hit my head. His thoughtfulness and concern were totally unexpected and touched me deeply, leading to a deeper friendship between the two of us. (related by Columban Father Patrick McInerney)

"We celebrate both our commonalities and differences, because if we had nothing in common we could not communicate, and if we had everything in common, we would have nothing to say." (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Pope Benedict XVI's meeting with UK religious leaders, 17 September 2010)

[Damietta Peace Initiative \(DPI\)](#): St Francis of Assisi met the Sultan, Melek al-Kamil at Damietta in 1219 at the height of the crusades. Today in Jos in northern Nigeria which has seen Christian-Muslim conflict, Franciscan Sisters are extensively involved in pastoral work and health care in the prisons and young offenders' institutions. The shared projects of the DPI might seem tiny, but, on a local scale, they are massive. For instance, Christians and Muslims discovered that they were united by a common love of football and of music, so they came together to form a football team and a choir which even succeeded in recording a CD.



How you can use the Golden Rule Poster

- Read and pray about how you can apply the *Golden Rule* in your life, in your family, with your neighbors, with people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Start a discussion group on *The Golden Rule Poster* in your family, neighborhood, work place, community
- Present *The Golden Rule* to students at your school - encourage them to find ways to implement it in the classroom, in the playground, in relationships between students and also between students and teachers.
- Encourage the principal or teachers to display *The Golden Rule Poster* in a prominent place in your school.
- Talk with your religious leader -priest, imam, rabbi- about the *Golden Rule* and find ways that your religious community can apply it in their relations with one another and with people of other faiths.
- Encourage the religious leader -priest, imam, rabbi- in your place of worship to display *The Golden Rule Poster* in a prominent place in your church, synagogue, mosque, gurduwara.
- Explore and use the free online resources available at [Scarboro Missions](#):
 - [Workshop Guidelines](#)
 - [School curriculum](#)
 - [Meditation Exercises](#)
 - [Business ethics](#)
 - [The Global ethic \(more\)](#)





Practical Tips for Growing Interfaith Relations

- Greet neighbors from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds with a friendly smile; that's all it takes to start a journey of discovery that will be mutually enriching
- Meet and get to know someone from another religion; personal encounter is the best way to break down barriers, learn about the other, expand your horizons, and be challenged to explain your own religious convictions
- Read a reliable book about another religion so that you are better informed
- Ask questions of followers of other religions; if you are sincere and respectful they will not be offended but will appreciate your interest and be more than happy to satisfy your curiosity
- Visit the place of worship of another religion -mosque, synagogue, temple, gurudwara- on your own if needs be but preferably with a group to bolster your confidence and to share the experience
- Acknowledge significant family occasions of colleagues and neighbours from other religious, ethnic or cultural backgrounds e.g. offer condolences on a death, extend well wishes for a wedding, give congratulations on a birth; such ordinary human gestures are the stuff of life
- Give greetings to friends and neighbours of different religious and ethnic backgrounds on religious and national feast days e.g. read and distribute a copy of annual Vatican message for the major religious feasts of Eid (Islam), Vesakh (Buddhist), Deepavali (Hindu)
- Say a prayer for believers from other religions on their feast days and get your faith community to do likewise; prayer creates sympathy for fellow creatures and public prayer creates awareness
- Invite colleagues, friends and neighbours for a discussion group or study group on another religion
- Invite a representative from that religion to speak to your school, congregation or group
- Have a screening in your home, school, or parish of a DVD on interfaith relations (see p. 7)
- Work together on common values e.g. family, environment and other social justice issues i.e. dialogue of action
- Do not allow stereotypical negative comments made at home or at work to go unchallenged.
- Sign up to receive *Bridges* to receive regular reminders of interfaith activities (see p.1)
- Invite a Columban from the *Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations* to your school, parish, or group
- Give hospitality - and be open to receive it - e.g. *iftar* meal during Ramadan; simply sharing a "cuppa" or a meal together is a great way to break down prejudices and build friendships



National Religious Organizations in Australia



[National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council \(NATSICC\)](#)



[Australian Baha'i Community](#)



[The Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils](#)



[National Council of Churches in Australia \(NCCA\) Anglican Church of Australia](#)

[The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Uniting Church of Australia](#)



[Australia \(Nationwide\) I-Kuan Tao Headquarters Inc. \(Confucianism\)](#)



[The Hindu Council of Australia](#)



[The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils](#)



[Jains in Australia](#)



[The Executive Council of Australian Jewry](#)



[The Sikh Council of Australia](#)



[The Taoist Tai Chi Society of Australia Inc](#)



[Australian and New Zealand Unitarian Universalist Association \(ANZUUA\)](#)



[Australian Zoroastrian Association NSW -](#)



Selected Interreligious Organizations in Australia



[Affinity Intercultural Foundation](#)



[Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture](#)



[Australian Council of Christians and Jews](#)



[Australian Intercultural Society \(AIS\)](#)



[Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims, and Jews](#)



[Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations \(APRO\)](#)



[Australian Religious Response to Climate Change \(ARRCC\)](#)



[Believing Women for a Culture of Peace](#)



[Catholic Bishops Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations](#)



[Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University -](#)



[Centre for Interfaith Ministry, Education and Research \(CIMER\)](#)



[Inter-religious Dialogue Network, ACU](#)



[Faith, Ecology Network \(FEN\)](#)



[Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia \(JCMA\)](#)



[Religions for Peace Australia \(RfP\)](#)



[Together for Humanity](#)



[Women's Interfaith Network \(WIN\)](#)



Australian Government Organizations



[Multicultural NSW](#)

[Department of Home Affairs](#)



[Department of Social Services](#)

International Interreligious Organizations



[Alliance of Civilisations](#)



[Dialogue Institute](#)



[International Council of Christians and Jews \(ICCJ\)](#)

Jesuit Interreligious
Dialogue & Relations

[Jesuit Interreligious Dialogue and Relations](#)



[Parliament of the World's Religions](#)



[Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue](#)



[Religions for Peace \(RfP\)](#)



[The Global Ethic Foundation](#)



[The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#)



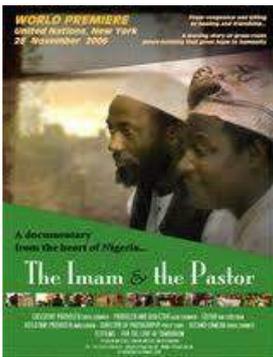
[United Religions Initiative](#)

[Women of Faith Network](#)

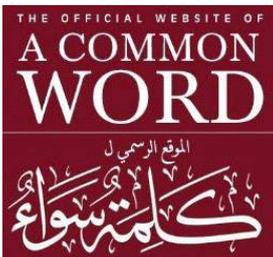


[World Council of Churches](#)

Resources on Interreligious Dialogue



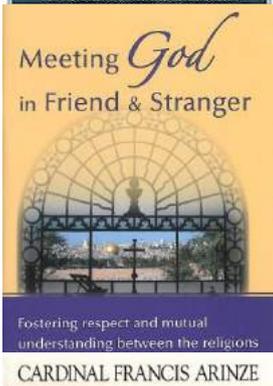
The Imam and the Pastor: Pastor James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa were sworn enemies. Both led militias to defend the mosque and the church. Through intermediaries, they came to know one another and were reconciled. Now they work together for mediation of Christian-Muslim conflict. This DVD documents the remarkable turnabout in their relationship which in the circumstances is nothing less than a miracle. [Available from shops and online]



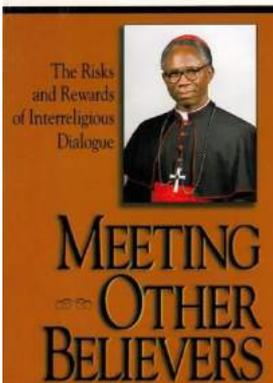
A Common Word is an open letter from Muslim religious leaders to the Pope and to the leaders of the Orthodox, Protestant and churches everywhere. Using texts from the Bible and the Quran, it argues that love of God and love of neighbour is foundational to both Christianity and Islam and therefore provides a sound basis for dialogue.



Of Gods and Men tells the dramatic story of the Cistercian Monks of Tibherine in the Atlas Mountains in Algeria. Civil war between the army and Islamists was leading to indiscriminate violence. The Islamists ordered all foreigners out of the country. But out of double fidelity to the Muslim people of the local village and to God, the monks decided to stay. The film portrays their daily life and their relationship with the villagers. Their sacrifice expresses the ideal relationship of Christians to Muslims. [Available from DVD shops and online]



Meeting God in Friend and Stranger: Fostering Respect and Mutual Understanding between the Religions is a new teaching document by the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales. Published at Easter 2010, it is the latest and newest teaching document of the Catholic Church. [Available from [The Catholic Truth Society](http://TheCatholicTruthSociety), London or downloaded as a pdf]



Meeting Other Believers: The Risks and Rewards of Interreligious Dialogue by Cardinal Francis Arinze is an excellent account of the Catholic Church's approach to interreligious dialogue. As President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue from 1985-2002 Cardinal Arinze had long experience in interreligious relations around the world and as a gifted author he is able to express what he learned in very simple terms. [Available from Catholic bookstores and online]

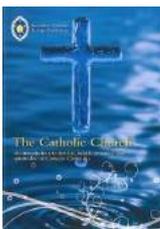


Columban Resources on Interreligious Dialogue

N.B. Simply click on the link to go to the Shopping Cart



[Ten Things Everyone Needs to Know About Islam](#) by Professor John L Esposito. This booklet is authoritative and accessible. It presents answers to the ten most burning questions about Islam and Muslims that are on everyone's mind. His answers are clear, direct, balanced and informative. (29 pp.)



[The Catholic Church](#) by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. This booklet introduces to believers from other religions and others the life, beliefs, practices and spirituality of Catholic Christians. It presents the key elements of Catholic identity and teaching in very summary form. (20 pp.)