

# **Guidelines for Interfaith Events and Dialogue**

**Prepared by the  
Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue  
and the House of Bishops**

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# Guidelines for Interfaith Events and Dialogue



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# Guidelines for Interfaith Events and Dialogue

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## **Preliminaries**

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In this document we use the term “Interfaith” to refer to the relations among different world religions, for example: Buddhism, Islam, Christianity. The term “Interfaith” does not, and should not refer to relations across different Christian denominations. For such relations, the term “Ecumenical” is appropriate.

This document originally was prepared by the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue and the House of Bishops, published at Epiphany 2007, and circulated to all Church of Ireland clergy. It is hoped that the current revision will be of use both within and beyond the Church of Ireland.

# **1 Introduction**

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The society in which the Church of Ireland is today called to mission and to ministry is increasingly marked by a plurality of religions, beliefs and spiritualities. Beyond the visibly and culturally identifiable communities of faith, there is also a wider plurality and fluidity of spirituality in our societies.

It is important to create, nurture and maintain positive and informed relationships with people of all faiths. This must be handled with an integrity which respects both the faiths of others and the Christian faith. Any mishandling of Interfaith situations can easily lead to hurt for others and to division among members of the Church of Ireland. In light of this, these Guidelines are offered to clergy and laity, in particular in the Church of Ireland, involved in planning or taking part in Interfaith events and encounters with people of other faiths at parish and national level.

## 2 Guiding Principles

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Humanity is made in the image and likeness of God and all people are our brothers and sisters by creation. The concepts of hospitality and welcoming the stranger are deeply embedded in the Hebrew Bible. Abraham welcomed travelling strangers to a meal and found himself in the presence of God (Genesis 18: 1-15). The writer of the letter to the Hebrews encourages the Christian community not to neglect to show hospitality to strangers (Hebrews 13:2). We may find that we meet Christ himself when we welcome the stranger (Matthew 25:35). If we take to heart the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), we may be reminded that compassion and good-will may issue from unexpected quarters if only we take time to notice.

In relating to those of other faiths, it is important to create and develop relationships and understanding between people as individuals and as communities. Church of Ireland clergy and lay people are encouraged to take positive and proactive steps in establishing good neighbourly relationships and to foster an accurate understanding of what other people believe. Dialogue, with respect, openness and honesty all around, is of great significance and importance in the building or trusting and mutually supportive relationships between and within faith communities.

Freedom of religious expression is a fundamental human right, and Christians in Ireland must be committed to it and to the principle of entitlement to worship for people of other faiths. This is what we expect of others in countries which are not historically or culturally Christian and what we should expect to be provided in our own country. Indeed as a traditionally Christian society, we have a leadership role to advocate for the inclusion and needs of those from smaller faith communities.

Dialogue must enhance peace and justice, and respect the integrity of creation. It should never be an instrument for continuing past hurts or perpetuating injustices. Those who suffer for their faith in all lands cry out for our compassion.

True dialogue and integrity in Interfaith relations also demand a respect for our own Christian, Trinitarian tradition along with being committed to what we believe, if we are to be representative in a broad and comprehensive way of our own tradition and of our fellow believers. We have Good News to share with the world (Matthew 28:19- 20), and the gift of the Spirit to the Church (Acts 2:1-21) sends us out to meet people of all faiths, traditions and cultures.

## 3 Interfaith Events

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### 1. General

When people of other faiths and their leaders are invited to join with us in the life of our churches, we should respect their beliefs, offer friendship and hospitality, and make them welcome. Most often the invitation will not be to a worship service, but to community events hosted by the church. In such events there are some practicalities to consider, which may include food and the use of alcohol, but very often there will be little that is complicated. These are people being invited to share with Christians. They are welcomed and included.

If the invitation is to participate in some way in a service of Christian worship, a discussion should take place beforehand, explaining the context of the service to which they have been invited and that there is no expectation that they will participate in a way that is contrary to their own faith convictions. They should not be asked to, or feel under pressure to, adopt a posture that implies worship, whether this is sitting, kneeling or standing, or be placed against their wishes in a position of visible prominence in a church. Such visitors should be treated with warm hospitality, and with the recognition that some may well feel uncomfortable in an environment unusual to them.

In the Church of Ireland, where there are any questions or doubts about the place or role of visitors, the Canons of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland must be followed carefully and the advice and judgment of the Ordinary (the bishop) sought.

Worship in consecrated churches of the Church of Ireland must always be in the name of God the Holy Trinity. All worship in churches must be guided by this principle. In the context of Christian worship, it is not appropriate to use prayers that are not addressed to God or are not fully consonant with Christian worship. Scriptural readings for use in the context of Christian worship are to be from the Bible.

Christian worship can never be syncretistic. Where there is any question about this, again, the Canons must be followed carefully and the advice and judgment of the Ordinary sought.

While people of other faiths may be invited to bring greetings or to speak to a parish or congregation, it is not deemed appropriate for a person of another faith to preach in the context of Christian worship. Where someone of another faith brings a greeting to a Church of Ireland parish or congregation, it is appropriate that this should take place before the service proper begins or after the service has ended. If there are seemingly insurmountable difficulties, the exchange of greetings can take place appropriately in a venue other than the church building, such as in the context of hospitality in a church hall or community hall. We



will be careful not to do anything that compromises our Christian Trinitarian faith (nor should we expect interfaith guests to engage in something they feel would compromise their faith), but as long as our invitations and sharing of events is taking place in the context of genuine and growing friendship it is unlikely that such issues will arise. Equally, interfaith neighbours who issue invitations to Christians most likely will have thought through the context well, and will only make an invitation in which multi-faith participation is appropriate.

## **2. Occasions of Local or National Importance**

When there is an occasion of major importance, whether local or national, and people of different faiths are gathered in an agreed common venue other than in a Church of Ireland church building, it is appropriate to invite representatives of each faith in sequence to lead their people in prayer. This is best made clear by leaving a distinctive gap between each contribution. If there is a time of silent reflection, it should be described and differentiated as such.

If the occasion is marked by an event held in a Church of Ireland church building, other-faith representatives may be invited to express the heartfelt feelings of their people and to introduce silent reflection rather than to say or lead prayers. In such a situation the advice and judgement of the Ordinary should be sought.

For events of local, national or international importance, the advice of the Ordinary should be sought in relation to venue and content. Every encouragement should be given to all parties concerned to prepare their response quickly and collaboratively.

## 4 12 Issues for Christians in Interfaith Encounter

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Meeting people of other faiths can be a profoundly transforming experience for people individually, leading to a deepening, renewing and enlarging of faith. As Christians, however, we are never involved in Interfaith situations solely as individuals, but always also as members of our faith community. This representative role has a particularly high profile for those who are ordained. Yet Interfaith encounter is also an area of Christian discipleship where lay people have a vital role to play. They too speak and act on behalf of the whole Church and have many opportunities to model respect and that which is sometimes called “the hospitality of God” in daily life.

### 1. Building trust

Interfaith encounter, at a personal level, includes the patient, joyful process of getting to know our neighbours of other faiths, earning their respect and becoming their friends. Within relationships of this kind, built up over many years, dialogue becomes authentic, the quest for truth can be honestly pursued and difficult issues can be addressed.

### 2. Speaking truthfully

Speaking truthfully means that we avoid simplistic language. We need to recognise the complexity and diversity of all faith communities, including our own. When we speak of the beliefs and practices of others, we must first seek good information and rely on authoritative sources to build up our knowledge. It is important that we take time to listen to our neighbours, and to understand their perspectives and beliefs on their own terms. We must talk about our neighbours in language that is authentic and reflects an accurate understanding of them.

It is unfair to compare the ideals of our own religion with the practice of another, or *vice versa*. Christians and members of other communities need to acknowledge that we all face challenges in living by faith in our societies and that we often fall short of the ideals. Even in situations where we strongly disagree with others, we must make an effort to understand their beliefs and practices, to respect the faith which informs them, and to love them as our neighbours. If we feel there are times when we must be critical of others’ positions, we cannot sidestep the need for self-criticism and the challenge of criticism by others. It is also the case that there may be considerable diversity within each faith community.

### 3. Sharing our faith

We are called to share our faith with others in ways which are confident but sensitive. We must be ready to listen and to learn as well as to speak. We cannot force our beliefs on

others, but we should always be ready to witness to our faith by deeds as well as by words. We must never exploit the situation of vulnerable individuals and groups, nor make our service of others conditional on their accepting the Christian faith.

Within our churches, we recognise that Christians differ among themselves about the relationship between Interfaith dialogue and evangelism. It is important that these differences be discussed openly and respectfully in the light of our theology and experience.

#### **4. Coming together before God**

There will be times when Christians would like to come together with people of other faiths in an attitude of prayer and worship before God. This may happen, for example, in the pastoral context of a marriage or a funeral, or as part of the ongoing life of a group or organization. It may happen at times of crisis, remembrance or thanksgiving, locally or nationally. Some Christians welcome occasions like this. Others will find them difficult. Similarly, a range of attitudes will also be found among people of other faiths.

When Interfaith gatherings are organised, it is important to be clear about the purposes of the event, to consider carefully what is an appropriate venue and to ensure that all present can take part with integrity and without confusion in what is planned. Sharing silence can provide a valuable and powerful way of expressing our presence together before God. During such a coming together we are also learning from the experience of being present as honoured guests at one another's times of prayer and worship.

#### **5. Responding to changing societies**

Religious and cultural diversity has brought a new vitality to many communities. But confusion and resentment can be felt in long-established communities by some who find their neighbourhoods transformed. It is important to maintain an authentic, respectful and engaged Christian presence at the local level in multi-faith areas. At the same time, we need to be aware of the ethnic and religious discrimination in our societies which affect all faith groups. Both considerations require courage, courtesy, compassion and dialogue.

#### **6. Educating and nurturing in faith**

Where the Church is involved in education, we aim to ensure that children and young people are adequately equipped for life as citizens of a religiously plural society. Christianity should be taught together with an awareness both of its international reach and of the cultural diversity represented in local situations. At its best, the positive values and contribution

that faith communities make to society should be celebrated. This approach can build good foundations of mutual respect and understanding for all.

Religious education and nurturing of faith are important parts of the ethos, curriculum and activities of most schools during the academic year. In Ireland, the Religious Education courses at secondary schools includes teaching on the main aspects of the five major world religions – Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam, and respect and tolerance for people of other beliefs or world views is underlined. The Christian faith is taught within this framework of world religions, and pupils learn the basic history, beliefs, practices, festivals and celebrations of Christianity. These Religious Education Courses ensure that pupils are aware of the pluralist society that Ireland has become in recent years. Furthermore, Interfaith relationships and ecumenism are integral parts of these courses too.

Other activities in the school calendar can help to nurture faith in a more direct manner, for example: assemblies, retreats, weekends away, quiet days, Christmas services, Easter events, graduation services, special events and visiting speakers. Also, the addition of a meditation room or place of worship on campus can allow young people the opportunity to practice their faith during school hours.

Carol services, nativity plays, music classes, history lessons, school uniforms, and sports clothing and events all raise questions about sensitivity to the needs and traditions of people of all faiths. At the same time, the cultural and religious traditions of all pupils are due respect. Schools, ideally, are safe and appropriate places in which to share experiences and learn mutual respect and trust. The use of Christian symbols should not be assumed to cause offence to those of other faiths. They help us to express honestly who we are, and their use should be sensitive but unashamed. Christianity has been part of the fabric of Irish society for millennia. It is appropriate that in schools and workplaces there be a proper but sensitive expression of this reality.

Within the church community, teaching needs to be shaped in such a way as to help Christians explore the Interfaith implications of our own faith, and to reach new understandings of how much, for example, Jews, Christians and Muslims share in common. Experiences emanating from educational opportunities can help to develop in us a proper confidence in our own faith and a generous openness to others.

## **7. Supporting family life**

Clergy and others with a ministry of pastoral care should be equipped to provide appropriate advice and support for all. They also need to access suitable resources for the nurture and

education of children of Interfaith couples, and to develop patterns of support for the families of those who have converted to or from other faiths. There is also a need to share good practice in the pastoral care for every stage of family life, through both celebrations and challenges.

### **8. Working for the common good**

Co-operation with people in other faith groups can take place on practical projects where this is appropriate and possible. The Church has a particular role to play in encouraging government bodies and local authorities to explore and to understand the complexities of faith community organisations. People of different faiths can, and ought, to share common concerns for the whole of society. At the same time, we all need to be honest about the real differences we can experience when we try to interpret in practical terms values which may sound the same when expressed more widely as generalities. The Church ought to work with people of other faiths, for example, in seeking the welfare of asylum seekers and refugees, or on international issues such as human rights, world poverty and debt, global peace, the environment and the integrity of creation.

### **9. Involving women and men**

In many Interfaith situations there is a need to strengthen the presence and active involvement of women. We ought also to note that in some contexts it may be men who are under-represented. We should strive to ensure that participation in Interfaith events has a fair gender balance and, in any case, to set a positive example by insisting on this in the involvement of members of our own Church. At the same time, we need to be aware that the strength of cultural and religious factors may inhibit the participation of women alongside men in Interfaith activities. In Interfaith dialogue, we should be ready to raise issues of women's rights as human rights.

### **10. Engaging with international issues**

It is impossible to separate Interfaith relations in Ireland from the situations in other countries. International issues may have a serious impact on particular faith groups, and at times of crisis we should be ready to show solidarity with communities who may be feeling under threat. The situation of vulnerable minorities in other countries will often form a significant theme of dialogue, and the Church and its members often feel particular bonds of prayer and affection with Christian communities experiencing persecution. At the same time we need to make it clear that it is unfair to hold faith communities in our island to account, directly or indirectly, for the actions of their fellow believers in other parts of the world and *vice versa*. We also need to ensure that political causes do not take over the agenda of justice.

### **11. Safeguarding the freedom to believe**

The Christian commitment to love our neighbours as ourselves and to seek justice for all leads us to affirm the importance of religious freedom in every society. This is safeguarded by the European Convention on Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his [or her] religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and in public or private, to manifest his [or her] religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

We recognise the responsibility that we have to support freedom of worship for all faith communities. There will be occasions when we need to challenge the attitudes of some who may be perceived to be discriminating against some faith communities. Freedom to worship is cherished by Christians and needs to be enabled for all faiths in Ireland.

### **12. Changing religious commitment**

Where the Spirit is at work, we rejoice that conversions of people to the way of Jesus Christ may happen. This must always be the free result of God’s interaction with others. Interfaith encounters can be powerful and unpredictable in the transforming effect they have on people’s lives. People may change their religious commitment away from, as well as towards, Christianity. People of different faiths may also feel that Interfaith encounter brings them closer to God within the framework of their own religious commitment.

As Christians, we need to be aware of the difficulties new believers face. Our Churches need to be prepared to adopt new, better ways of embracing and including new members. Some converts can find the concept of Interfaith dialogue difficult, especially if it involves them in encounter with the religion they previously espoused. Other converts may have a valuable personal contribution to make to Interfaith understanding. Their place in dialogue should be affirmed and utilised.

## **5 Some areas for practical consideration**

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### **1. Marriage**

Marriages are wonderful times of joy and celebration for the couple, their families and communities. When a couple ask for a marriage in church and one of the parties is from a non-Christian faith community, adequate time should be allowed for preparation and to ensure that both parties fully understand the content of the Church of Ireland marriage service. If a request is made for involvement of clergy of another faith in the service, then the advice of the Ordinary should be sought.

### **2. Baptism**

Baptism is a Christian sacrament and not merely a rite of passage. All family members of a baptismal candidate need to understand that sponsors and godparents are required to be baptised Christians. There are positive ways to involve people of other faiths within Christian ceremonies with integrity and these should be explored to allow inclusion of all who will be important in the candidate's life.

The baptism of adults of other faiths who become Christian needs to be handled sensitively and carefully, and at times with discretion. The moment of baptism can be perceived as the rejection of a cultural background as well as the fresh definition of religious identity. There may be implications at times negative, for the candidate, and their wider family as they live out their new faith commitment.

### **3. Communion**

Holy Communion is the sacramental food which nourishes us as Christians in our faith. While it is appropriate to invite other Christians who are communicant members of their churches and who share our Trinitarian faith to the table, it is not appropriate to open the invitation to non-Christians. Careful preparation beforehand can help to avoid causing offence. In light of the above, the onus is on us always to seek other effective opportunities to express our welcome and hospitality.

### **4. Funerals**

A Church funeral is appropriate for Christian people. But Christians increasingly do not always have exclusively Christian families. It is increasingly normal for people of all faiths and none to attend the funeral of a Christian friend of family member. This is to be celebrated and, in consultation with the family, we should look for ways of sensitively including all people in the service.

## **5. Church festivals and special services**

These are ideal opportunities to invite interfaith friends and neighbours to share with us and experience with us something of Christian gatherings and celebrations.

### ***Examples and ideas from across the Church Year***

Christmas Carol services are obvious, and quite natural, special events in the year when many churches share the invitation as widely as possible to make the wider community feel welcome. There are other times of the year when a welcome can be extended.

- **Harvest Thanksgiving:** In many parishes this is a truly joyous occasion, for which much preparation has gone into special music, decoration of the church, and encouragement of donations for charity, in particular charities assisting with food poverty. Our neighbours may appreciate an invitation to such services (and the tea or supper afterwards), and the opportunity to learn about the Christian Harvest Thanksgiving tradition.
- **Advent Carol or Reflection Service:** Even for Christians, Advent can get subsumed in pre-Christmas festivities. Our interfaith neighbours may be surprised to learn about the quieter and more solemn tone of Advent, with its themes of hope, waiting and expectation. If your church holds a carol service at the beginning of Advent, would this be an opportunity for an invitation?
- **Shrove/Pancake Tuesday:** If we come from a Christian background, we probably don't think twice about the amount of marketing that comes our way to sell us things that have long since come unmoored from their religious significance. So when all the shops have offers on pancake mix, maple syrup, and lemon juice about six weeks before Easter... our interfaith neighbours may be scratching their heads. Why not have a community Pancake Tuesday party? Pancakes, fruit and chocolate sauce make a fun dinner for everyone, and avoid dietary issues around meat (just remember that ordinary gummies and marshmallows are made with beef gelatine, so any with restrictions around meat will not be able to eat them). This is also an opportunity to explain the tradition of using up all the 'fat' ingredients in the home prior to fasting during the season of Lent.
- **Local Saints:** Some of our churches are named after local saints, or there is a local saint with an associated scenic spot with a pilgrimage walk or holy well. Neighbours of other faiths may appreciate an invitation to be part of this type of pilgrimage walk and to learn about this aspect of local history.



- **Significant Anniversaries:** Our historic buildings mark significant anniversaries from time to time. In some cases, work is undertaken on older buildings, and there is a celebration to mark the successful conclusion. On one such occasion, a particular church community, who had already developed some level of connection and friendship with another faith group in the locality extended an invitation for representatives to attend the celebratory service. They discussed together what would happen in the service. As it was a service of Holy Communion, their interfaith friends felt comfortable remaining only until the sharing of the peace, and did not wish to remain present during the Eucharistic prayer. This was discussed and agreed, and it was made known to the congregation, that the group would leave at the point of the offertory hymn. Because this had occurred in the context of an already developing friendship, there was no offence taken, but a great sense of joy that their friends were happy to be present for some part of the service and share in the celebration.
- **Gathering around our texts:** In your parish community you may find that there is a small group who would like to come together to dialogue in a more intentional way. One way of doing this is through Scriptural Reasoning. Scriptural Reasoning is a tool for inter-faith dialogue whereby people of different faiths come together to read and reflect on their scriptures. It involves agreeing in advance a theme to explore (for example, peace or fasting), and inviting a representative of each faith group present to share a short passage of scripture related to that theme. The goal of the discussion is not to come to an agreement, but rather to listen and to learn what each faith tradition offers on the topic, and in what way each passage of scripture is meaningful within its own faith tradition. More information and suggested resources are freely available here: <http://www.scripturalreasoning.org/what-is-scriptural-reasoning.html>

## 6. Festivals of other faiths

We have long accepted that it is appropriate to have Christmas trees in our villages, towns and cities and nativity scenes in shop windows in the weeks before Christmas. Other communities, as they continue to grow and develop in Ireland, will, like Christians, publicly express their faith through festivals and other important occasions. When Christians are invited to these joyful events it is more often than not appropriate for us to engage, as our interfaith friends will have exercised the same sensitivity as do Christians in issuing invitations. It is appropriate and generally welcomed for us as Christians to proactively send greetings to communities of other faiths as they celebrate their religious festivals.

## **7. Community events**

The organisers of community events in Ireland often feel it is culturally appropriate to have an opening or closing period of prayer, or to mark major events in the community with a service of worship. Even when we do not think these occasions of prayer and worship are wholly appropriate theologically, pastoral sensitivity means we can never dismiss outright requests for such time of prayer. In light of changing religious demographics, there increasingly will be occasions when not only Christians, but leaders of other faith traditions are invited to share in such events.

## **8. Hospital chaplaincy**

Healthcare facilities are religiously and belief-diverse contexts where patients, staff and volunteers make up a wide variety of belief communities. Hospital Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care teams should reflect diversity in membership where possible and should also build and maintain good working links and relationships with all faith and belief communities in order to best serve the needs of all in the healthcare community.

In the Republic of Ireland, the Health Service Executive Intercultural Guide is a good place to find information about particular needs and preferences as well as specific requirements at the beginning of life, diet, medical procedures, approaching the end of life, and post-death traditions. The guide is available online at:

**<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/socialinclusion/interculturalguide/interculturalguide.html>**

In addition, the Hospital Chaplaincy/Pastoral Care Team should be approached to facilitate the spiritual, religious and cultural needs of patients and staff. The Chaplaincy/Pastoral Care Team should also have contact details for nominated representatives for all faith and belief traditions. Public healthcare facilities should strive to be inclusive of and sensitive to the beliefs and practices of all in the provision of worship and spiritual facilities and in the sensitive use of symbols/ imagery.

Healthcare Chaplains and Pastoral carers are also trained in the sensitivities of faith and belief diversity and many will have experienced their training alongside people of other faiths.

In Northern Ireland, the Health and Social Services Trusts provide training in interfaith chaplaincy practices. The drive to equip healthcare staff for encounters with every cultural and religious practice is recognised to be both urgent and vital to the delivery of successful

healthcare provision. Sensitive and informed approaches to chaplaincy in healthcare settings necessitates keeping in step with the rapid pace of development of religious diversity in our increasingly pluralistic society.

*Other helpful links:*

The Network for Pastoral, Spiritual & Religious Care in Health (NPSRCH), formerly the Healthcare Chaplaincy Faith & Belief Group (HCFBG), is to promote and support high quality person-centred pastoral, spiritual, and religious care in healthcare:

**<https://network-health.org.uk>**

Northern Ireland Healthcare Chaplains Association:

**<https://www.nihca.co.uk>**

National Association of Healthcare Chaplains

**[www.nahc.ie](http://www.nahc.ie)**

The Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (Ireland) Ltd.

**[www.acpeireland.com](http://www.acpeireland.com)**

## **9. Hospitality**

### ***Visiting other places of worship***

Points for practical consideration before visiting other places of worship include, among others, appropriate dress. Visitors should be careful to ask where and when they should stand or sit. For example, it is not appropriate for Christians to kneel in prayer in a mosque as this symbolises to Muslims that one has submitted to Islam.

### ***Welcoming visitors to our churches***

It is important to do everything practicable to ensure that guests are treated with respect. Visitors should be asked where they would like to sit. Clergy and churchwardens should remember that providing a kneeler in a prominent position may not be appropriate for a visitor who may want to attend without participating and may in fact not wish to give the impression that he or she is joining in prayer. Visitors should not be asked to pray or to read without discreet inquiries beforehand.

### ***Visiting the homes of others and welcoming visitors to one's own home***

Visiting the homes of others is an opportunity to experience hospitality and to learn about the beliefs and practices of others. It is a normal way to relate to people and a wonderful way to discover what we have in common, where there are any differences and how we understand cultural and other situations.

## **10. Dealing with objections**

As a parish, school, diocese or community develops its own framework for Interfaith relations, difficulties and problems may arise. We need to be aware that objections to decisions and practices may come from different traditions within the Church and for very different reasons. We must model hospitality and challenge ignorance. In this way we will respond in love and, as well as bearing in mind our responsibilities to our own faith community, remain courteous in our understanding and presentation of others.

## **6 Postscript**

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Without dialogue between peoples of faith, the vacuum in communication and understanding can quickly and easily be filled by, mistrust, prejudice, bigotry and racism. Bigotry is fed by fear and ignorance. Without dialogue and mutual respect, extremism and hatred can grow. A proper approach will embrace learning about what adherents of particular world faiths say about their own faith rather than relying on what is alleged by others on their behalf. When Interfaith co-operation works well, all of our lives are enriched.

The knowledge and understanding of others enhances our lives, helps us to understand difference, gives substance to our belief, and points us towards lives rooted and grounded in love.

## **Bibliography and Further Reading**

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*Hospitality and the Other*, by Amos Yong (Orbis Books, 2008)

### **Websites**

*Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum*

**<https://interfaithni.org>**

*Dublin City Interfaith Forum*

**<https://www.dcif.ie>**

*Irish Council of Christians and Jews*

**<https://www.iccj.org/home/member-organisations/ireland-irish-council-of-christians-and-jews.html>**

