

60th
Anniversary
of
Nostra Aetate



Sunday 26th October 2025
St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham



WELCOME

I wish to offer you today a very warm welcome to St Chad's Cathedral and to the Archdiocese of Birmingham as we gather to mark sixty years since the declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions, *Nostra Aetate*, was first proclaimed by Pope Saint Paul VI on 28 October 1965.

At the time of its publication, this short but very important declaration expressed a clear vision and intent on the part of the Catholic Church to recognise those 'rays of truth' and goodness reflected in other religions, so as to initiate and promote a deeper dialogue between us all.

Pope Saint Paul VI observed that 'in her task of promoting unity and love among men, indeed among nations, [the Church] considers above all in this declaration what men have in common and what draws them to fellowship'. Although these words were written over half a century ago, they remain as important and relevant as ever. Our friendship and dialogue with one another continue to bear much fruit through a mutual understanding and appreciation of the gifts that we share and of those truths we hold in common.

I am, therefore, most grateful to all those who have helped to arrange this day and to those who have kindly agreed to be a part of our celebrations today. I hope and pray that our time together will be an opportunity to renew and refresh our commitment to this important work for the good of the Church and the world that we serve.

60th
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of
Nostra Aetate



+ Bernard Longley

✠ Bernard Longley
Archbishop of Birmingham



INTRODUCTION

TO THE NATIONAL NOSTRA AETATE

60TH ANNIVERSARY BOOKLET

October 28th 2025 marks the 60th Anniversary of Nostra Aetate, the ground-breaking declaration of the Second Vatican Council on the Catholic Church's relations with non-Christian religions. It was a call to reject prejudice and embrace the universal dignity of every human person as created in the image and likeness of God. It paved the way for a new era of understanding, particularly in Catholic-Jewish relations, and it promoted respect for all religions. For six decades the principles of this document have inspired and guided countless initiatives for dialogue, reconciliation and cooperation on the part of the Holy See and Catholic dioceses all around the world. It has helped the Catholic Church to build relationships and promote cooperation with followers of different religious traditions so as to foster better understanding, friendship and working relationships in the search for truth, justice and peace. In a world scarred by religious extremism, cultural polarisation and conflicts often fuelled by misunderstanding, this dialogue is a moral imperative. As we would all recognise, it requires humility, openness, and a commitment to active listening so as to ensure that differences enrich the dialogue rather than divide.

This 60th anniversary is celebrated within the Catholic Church's Jubilee Year with its emphasis on hope. Over the past sixty years interreligious dialogue has shown itself to be a powerful means of healing wounds, preventing conflict and building bridges of harmony in a fragmented world. The national celebration of this anniversary here in St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, provides the Catholic Church in England and Wales with an opportunity to express gratitude to colleagues from other religions for the warmth of the interreligious dialogue and the close working relationships that have been built up over those years. We thank you for responding to the invitation from Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Archbishop Bernard Longley, the President and Vice-President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and joining us today. This is an opportune time, both to celebrate the past sixty years and also to renew together our commitment to interreligious dialogue.

With grateful thanks for everyone contributing to the event today.



+Patrick

Rt Rev Patrick McKinney
Bishop of Nottingham
& Lead Catholic Bishop for Interreligious Dialogue



NOSTRA AETATE

PROGRAMME

1.30 pm - Welcome in the Grimshaw Room

followed by

Panel discussion: "Dying to Live": the capacity of faith communities in Birmingham
to discuss end of life concerns

Moderator: Associate Professor Maggie Doherty - Centre Lead,
The Art of Living and Dying Well - St. Mary's University

3.30 pm - Welcome Address Sung Vespers
Including reflections from Faith Leaders

followed by

5.00 pm - Light Refreshments in the Grimshaw Room

SUNG VESPERS : EVENING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

ALL STAND AS THE BELL RINGS

INTRODUCTION

O God, come to our aid.
O Lord, make haste to help us.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen. Alleluia.

HYMN

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
To his feet your tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me his praise should sing?
Praise him! Praise him!
Praise him! Praise him!
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise him for his grace and favour,
To our fathers in distress;
Praise him still the same for ever,
Slow to chide and swift to bless,
Praise him! Praise him!
Praise him! Praise him!
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Fatherlike, he tends and spares us;
Well our feeble frame he knows;
In his hands he gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes.
Praise him! Praise him!
Praise him! Praise him!
Widely as his mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore him;
Ye behold him face to face;
Sun and moon bow down before him,
Dwellers all in time and space.
Praise him! Praise him!
Praise him! Praise him!
Praise with us the God of grace.

ALL SIT FOR THE SINGING OF THE FIRST PSALM

FIRST PSALM

Psalm 109 (110)

Christ the Lord is a priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek. Alleluia.

The Lord's revelation to my Master:
'Sit on my right:
your foes I will put beneath your feet.'

The Lord will wield from Sion
your sceptre of power:
rule in the midst of all your foes.

A prince from the day of your birth
on the holy mountains;
from the womb before the dawn I begot you.

The Lord has sworn an oath he will not change.
'You are a priest for ever,
a priest like Melchizedek of old.'

The Master standing at your right hand
will shatter kings in the day of his wrath.
He shall drink from the stream by the wayside
and therefore he shall lift up his head.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Christ the Lord is a priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek. Alleluia.

ALL STAND FOR THE PRAYER

PSALM PRAYER

Lord, from the rising of the sun to its setting your name is worthy of all praise. Let our prayer come like incense before you. May the lifting up of our hands be an evening sacrifice acceptable to you, Lord our God, who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

ALL SIT FOR THE SINGING OF THE SECOND PSALM

SECOND PSALM

Psalm 113B (115)

ANTIPHON

Our God is in heaven; he has power to do whatever he will. Alleluia.

Not to us, Lord, not to us,
but to your name give the glory
for the sake of your love and your truth,
lest the heathen say: 'Where is their God?'

But our God is in the heavens;
he does whatever he wills.
Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of human hands.

They have mouths but they cannot speak;
they have eyes but they cannot see;
they have ears but they cannot hear;
they have nostrils but they cannot smell.

With their hands they cannot feel;
with their feet they cannot walk.
Their makers will come to be like them
and so will all who trust in them.

Sons of Israel, trust in the Lord;
he is their help and their shield.
Sons of Aaron, trust in the Lord;
he is their help and their shield.

Our God is in heaven; he has power to do whatever he will. Alleluia.

You who fear him, trust in the Lord;
he is their help and their shield.
He remembers us, and he will bless us;
he will bless the sons of Israel.

The Lord will bless those who fear him,
the little no less than the great:
to you may the Lord grant increase,
to you and all your children.

May you be blessed by the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.
The heavens belong to the Lord
but the earth he has given to men.

The dead shall not praise the Lord,
nor those who go down into the silence.
But we who live bless the Lord
now and for ever. Amen.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever
shall be, world without end.
Amen.

ALL STAND FOR THE PRAYER

PSALM PRAYER

Lord, all justice and all goodness come from you; you hate evil and abhor lies. Lead us, your servants, in the path of your justice, so that all who hope in you may rejoice for ever and ever.
Amen.

ALL SIT FOR THE SINGING OF THE CANTICLE

CANTICLE

Apocalypse

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth:
For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem,
coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Behold the tabernacle of God is with men,
and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people,
and God himself shall be with them and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;
And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying,
neither shall there be anymore pain, for the former things are passed away.

ALL STAND FOR THE PRAYER

PRAYER

Almighty God, we rejoice that you have given us life. Give us the courage to work each day for the building up of your kingdom of justice, love, and peace.
Amen.

ALL SIT FOR THE READING AND THE SHORT RESPONSORY

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

A reading from the first letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters: earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SHORT RESPONSORY

ALL SING THE RESPONSE AFTER THE CHOIR, AND AFTER EACH LINE

Great is our Lord; great is his might.
Great is our Lord; great is his might.

His wisdom can never be measured.
Great is our Lord; great is his might.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
Great is our Lord; great is his might.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE REPRESENTATIVES OF FAITHS

ALL REMAIN SITTING FOR THESE REFLECTIONS, WHICH CAN BE FOUND ON PAGES 18-23

ALL STAND FOR THE SINGING OF THE GOSPEL CANTICLE

GOSPEL CANTICLE

Magnificat, Luke 1:39-56

The publican went home justified, for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted.

My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud-hearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones
and raises the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy,
the mercy promised to our fathers,
to Abraham and his sons for ever.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The publican went home justified, for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted.

ALL REMAIN STANDING FOR THE PRAYERS AND CONCLUSION OF VESPERS

PRAYERS AND INTERCESSIONS

God our Father calls us to love one another as God loves us. With trust and confidence we now turn to our loving Father in prayer.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for all nations: that they may seek the way that leads to peace, that human rights and freedom may be everywhere respected, and that the world's resources may be generously shared.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for a conversion of heart in those leaders who have the authority to make decisions; that the poor and the marginalised may be respected, and that a just and lasting peace may be established around the world.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for all who are homeless today: we pray for families searching for a place to live, and for refugees driven from their homeland.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for our families, and the community in which we live: that together we may strengthen the bonds of friendship which unite us and sustain us.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray that as people of faith we may grow in respect for each other, and seek ways to work together for the good of humanity.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

We give thanks for all whose work proclaims God's love: help us to serve the communities in whose life and work we share.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for ourselves: that in the coming week we may serve others in our work, and find peace when we rest.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for the faithful departed: that through the Father's mercy they may rest in peace.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Lord God, deepen our faith,
strengthen our hope,
enkindle our love;
and so that we may obtain what you promise,
make us love what you command.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

THE UNIVERSAL PEACE PROCLAMATION

SPOKEN TOGETHER:

Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth.
Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.
Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe.

ALL NOW EXCHANGE WITH ONE ANOTHER A SIGN OF PEACE.

BLESSING

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.
May almighty God bless you, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Go in peace.
Thanks be to God.

NOSTRA AETATE

DECLARATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CHURCH TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

- 1 In this age of ours, when every day the human race is being drawn more closely together, and the ties between different peoples are increasing, the Church gives closer attention to its relationship to non-Christian religions. In its task of promoting unity and love among peoples, indeed among nations, the Church considers above all what human beings have in common and what things draw them to fellowship.

One is the community of nations, one the origin they share, for God made the whole human race to live over the entire face of the earth. (See Acts 17.26.) One also is their final goal - God, whose providence, testimony of goodness, and intentions for salvation extend to all, (See Wisdom 8.1; Acts 14.17; Romans 2.6-7; 1 Timothy 2.4.) until the elect are united in the holy city which the brightness of God will illuminate and where the nations will walk in God's light. (See Revelation 21.23-24.) Men and women expect from the various religions answers to the hidden enigmas of the human condition, which today, as in times long ago, deeply stir the inner hearts of humanity. What is the human person? What is the meaning and purpose of our life? What is good and what is sin? What is the origin, what is the purpose, of human suffering? What is the way to attain true happiness? What are death, judgment and retribution after death? What, finally, is that final unutterable mystery which gathers up our existence, from which we take our rise and towards which we move?

- 2 From ancient times to the present, there is found among the various nations a certain perception of that hidden power which is present in the course of things and the events of human history – and at times an acknowledgement of a Supreme Being, or even of a Father. Such thoughtful awareness penetrates their lives with a profound religious sense. The religions associated with the progress of culture strive to respond to these questions with more subtle ideas and more developed language. Thus, in Hinduism the divine mystery is explored and propounded with an inexhaustible wealth of myths, and with penetrating philosophical investigations. Freedom is sought from the distresses of our state through various forms of ascetical life, through the depths of meditation, through taking refuge in God with loving confidence. In Buddhism, according to its various forms, the radical inadequacy of this changing world is acknowledged, and a way is taught whereby men and women with a devout and confident spirit may be able to reach a state of perfect freedom or acquire perfect illumination, whether through their own efforts or through help from on high. In like manner too, other religions which are to be found throughout the whole world strive in various modes to relieve the anxieties of the human heart by proposing ways (*vias*), that is to say, teachings and precepts for human living as well as sacred rites.

The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. It regards with sincere respect those ways of acting and living, those precepts and teachings which, while differing from what it holds and expounds, often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all human beings. Indeed, the Church proclaims and is bound to proclaim Christ who is 'the way, the truth and the life' (John 4.6), in whom people find the fullness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to God's own self. (See 2 Corinthians 5.18-19.)

The Church, therefore, exhorts its sons and daughters that, in prudence and love, through conversations and collaboration (*colloquia et collaborationem*) with the members of other religions, and in witness to Christian faith and life, they should acknowledge, preserve, and promote (*agnoscant, servent et promoveant*) those spiritual and moral good things, the social and cultural values, found among these people.

- 3 The Church also looks upon the Muslims with esteem. They worship one living and subsistent God, merciful and omnipotent, creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to human beings and to whose decrees, even those that are hidden, they seek to submit themselves completely, just as Abraham, from whom the Islamic faith freely takes its rise, submitted himself. They venerate Jesus as a prophet, even though they do not acknowledge him as God, and they also honour Mary, his virgin mother, and sometimes devoutly call upon her. In addition, they wait for the day of judgement when God will grant their due reward to all those who have been brought back to life. Hence, they value the moral life and worship God, especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Since over the course of the centuries not a few quarrels and enmities between Christians and Muslims have arisen, this holy synod urges everyone to forget all that has passed and to work sincerely for mutual understanding, and together to preserve as well as promote social justice and peace and liberty for the benefit of all human beings.

- 4 Reflecting on the mystery of the Church, this holy synod recalls the link whereby the people of the new covenant are spiritually united with the stock of Abraham. For the Church of Christ acknowledges that the beginnings of its own faith and election are already to be found among the patriarchs, Moses and the prophets, in accordance with the saving mystery of God. It therefore confesses that all who place their faith in Christ, children of Abraham according to faith, (See Galatians 3.7.) are included in the same Patriarch's call, and that the salvation of the Church is mystically prefigured in the exodus of the chosen people from the land of bondage. Hence the Church cannot forget that it was through the people, with whom God in God's own inexpressible mercy concluded the ancient covenant, that it received the revelation of the Old Testament and continues to draw nourishment from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree on

to which have been grafted wild shoots, the Gentiles. (See Romans 11.17-24.) For the Church believes that Christ, our peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles and by his cross made them both one in himself. (See Ephesians 2.14-16.)

The Church also keeps forever before its eyes the words of the Apostle about his own people: 'theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them according to the flesh is the Christ' (Romans 9.4-5). the Son of the Virgin Mary. And the Church recalls that the Apostles, the Church's foundation and pillars, sprang from the Jewish people, as well as so many of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world.

As holy scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not know the time of its visitation, (See Luke 19.44.) and for the most part the Jews did not accept the gospel - indeed, many of them fought against its spread. (See Romans 11.28.) Nevertheless, according to the Apostle, because of their ancestors, the Jews remain very dear to God (*adhuc carissimi manent*) whose gift and call are without regret. (See Romans 11.28-29.) Together with the prophets and the same apostle, the Church awaits that day known only to God, when all peoples will call upon the Lord with one voice and will serve him together 'under one yoke' (Zephaniah 3.9). (See Isaiah 66.23; Psalm 65.4; Romans 11.11-32.)

Since, therefore, the spiritual heritage common to both Christians and Jews is so great, this sacred synod seeks to foster and commend that mutual understanding and respect which is acquired especially through biblical and theological studies and from friendly conversations (*colloquia*).

Even though the Jewish authorities with their followers urged the death of Christ, (See John 19.6.) nevertheless what happened during his passion cannot be blamed indiscriminately on all Jews living at the time, still less on the Jews of today. While the Church is accounted the new people of God, the Jews are not to be represented as rejected or cursed by God, as if this followed from sacred scripture. Therefore, all should take care that in whatever pertains to catechesis or the proclamation of the Word of God nothing is taught which is not in keeping with the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

Furthermore, the Church, which rejects (*reprobat*) all persecutions against any people, remembering its shared inheritance with the Jewish people and motivated not by political reasoning but by the religious love of the Gospel, deplores (*deplorat*) hatred, persecution, and manifestations of anti-semitism directed against Jews at whatever time and by whomsoever.

Besides, as the Church has always maintained and still maintains, Christ freely and out of infinite love went to his passion and death for the sins of all humankind, that all might attain to salvation. It is the duty of the preaching Church, therefore, to announce the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the source of all grace.

- 5 We cannot truly call on God as the father of all if we refuse to treat in a brotherly and sisterly way any persons whatever for all are created in the image of God. The relation of human beings to God the Father and their relations to other men and women are so intimately linked together that Scripture says: 'The one who does not love does not know God' (1 John 4.8).

Therefore, the foundation is taken away from any theory or practice which discriminates between human beings or between peoples with regard to their human dignity and the rights that flow from it.

The Church rejects (*reprobat*) as foreign to the mind of Christ any kind of discrimination whatsoever between people, or harassment of them, done by reason of birth or colour, class or religion. On the contrary, this holy synod, following in the footsteps of the holy apostles, Peter and Paul, begs the Christian faithful to 'maintain noble conduct between all the peoples' (1 Peter 2.12), and - where it is possible - to live in peace with all human beings (See Romans 12.18.) so that they may truly become sons and daughters of the Father who is in heaven. (See Matthew 5.45.)

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JUDAISM

Hope is a very Jewish value. It is embedded in our Torah, our Talmud, our culture, and our traditions, from the Exodus story where the hope is to build a world free of oppression, to our messianic hopes that keep us committed to the task of repairing the world even in times of despair.

The late Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote, *“Optimism is the belief that things are going to get better. Hope is the belief that we can make things better ... It takes no courage to be an optimist, but it does need courage to hope”*. As the world appears quite dark right now, we need hope. Hope, as distinct from dreams or optimism, requires courage and action, a decision to fight against the odds in the belief that the world can be made better.

Let's set about changing the world together - if not for us, then for the sake of future generations. As it is said, it is not for us to complete the task, but neither are we free to desist from it.

In the words of Rabbi Ashira Boxman, *“We must hold onto hope. Hope has accompanied the Jewish people throughout history, and it doesn't stop here. May our challenges strengthen us, bring us closer together, and lead us towards a future of love, peace and renewed life”*.

Prepared by Yvonne Stollard



MUSLIM REFLECTION

We have more in common, than what is known to most. We acquire lessons from the same **Prophets** that are mentioned in our holy books, believe in the same one **God**, the divine source of the **holy scriptures**, the **Angels**, including **Archangel Gabriel**. We are recognised as followers of the **Abrahamic faiths** with **Prophet Jesus** as an esteemed Prophet who performed miracles.

The veneration of **Mary** is bonded with a chapter that was revealed in the Qur'an, named after Mary. She is described as a sinless, virtuous woman and the best of all women.

It mentions Prophet **Zachariah**, the husband of Mary's paternal aunt, how he was given the gift of a child named **John** at a very old age; how Mary was appointed a dedicated place in the house of worship; how Mary had a miraculous birth of Jesus without a father and a brief mention of Prophets **Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Ishmael** and **Enoch**.

Hajj and **Pilgrimage** to holy sites serve to find spiritual renewal. **Prayer** and **rosary** beads are used to deepen our connection with the creator. **Salvation** comes with an upright life and worship of God, by way of **prayer, alms, deeds** and **fasting**. The existence of **afterlife** is affirmed. **Art and Architecture** convey religious messages and express the magnificence of God. **Communal Worship** is practiced.

We are invited to be part of this caravan of respect, hope and togetherness, where we look beyond our differences and magnify our embedded similarities, travelling together on this auspicious journey, for the benefit of mankind. *Ameen*

Imam Mohammad Asad MBE
Birmingham Central Mosque



HINDU REFLECTION

The ancient Vedic scripture, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, expound three cardinal virtues for living a life of goodness. These are Self control, Charity and Compassion.

Compassion, or data in Sanskrit, means to understand the suffering of others and to have a heartfelt feeling to help them. Compassion is an essential element of the principle of ahimsa or causing no harm to others in thought, word or deed. People often misinterpret the law of karma as an excuse for not helping others because they are experiencing the results of their bad karma and should therefore be left to suffer. However, if we are in a position to offer our help and we refuse to do so, then that becomes our bad karma, and it is actually a form of himself or violence.

Whereas if we help others we accrue karmic merit and are then true followers of ahimsa or non-violence

The Mahabharat tells us that, "one should never do that to another which one regards as injurious to one's own self. This, in brief, is the rule of dharma (religion). Yielding to desire and acting differently, one becomes guilty of adharma" (irreligion)

The Bhagwad-gita, also explicitly mentions ahimsa and daya as being some of the quantities of a person endowed with a divine nature. With regards to data, it says, "Compassion for all living creatures".

So the practice of daya and ahimsa extends not only to the rest of mankind but also to the rest of creation

Prepared by Dinesh Chauhan



DHAMMAPADA

THE STORY OF KĀLĀYAKKHĪNĪ

1. Rival Wives and Birth Feud

In Sāvatti, a household had a wife who was barren. Fearing mistreatment, she arranged for her husband to marry another.

When the second wife became pregnant twice she was poisoned by the barren wife and miscarried. On the third pregnancy, the barren wife again caused abortion. Ultimately, the second wife died giving birth. Before her death, she cursed the barren wife and her future child a feud was born.

2. Rebirths and Continuing Hatred

They were reborn repeatedly as hen and cat, then deer and leopardess always locked in conflict. Finally, one was reborn as the daughter of a nobleman, the other as an ogress (yakkhini) named Kālī Yakkhini.

3. Pursuit and Refuge

The ogress pursued the noble daughter and her infant. The mother fled to the Jetavana Monastery, placing her child at the Buddha's feet for refuge. The guardian spirit prevented the ogress from entering.

4. Buddha's Admonition

The Buddha called both before him, recounted their long karmic history of hatred, and taught that hatred only breeds more hatred; only non-hatred (amiability, compassion) can end that spiral.

5. Handing Over the Child

Trusting the Buddha's wisdom, the mother handed her child to the ogress. The creature treated the child kindly caressing, kissing, treating it as her own and then returned it safely. This act broke the cycle of hatred, and peace was restored between them.

As a result, the ogress attained Sotāpanna (Stream-enterer first noble state) status and the feud was finally ended.

The Pairs (Yamakavaga)

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

Verse 5. Hatred is, indeed, never appeased by hatred in this world. It is appeased only by loving-kindness. This is an ancient law. At the end of the discourse, the ogress was established in Sotapatti Fruition (stream enterer first noble state) and the long-standing feud came to an end.



SIKH VERSES FOR NOSTRA AETATE CELEBRATION

Simrit bed puran pukaran pothhiaa

Naam bina sabh koorh gaali hochhiaa

From the ancient sacred texts, to all the scriptures of the world

All faiths proclaim the very same message:

That when we disconnect from Naam, the Divine Name -

From the infinite energy and wisdom God's true, eternal presence -

Everything in life becomes fake and shallow.

- Sri Guru Granth Sahib, ang 761

Karam dharam paakhand jo diseh tin jam jagaati lootai

Nirbaan kirtan gavoh karte kaa nimakh simrat jit chhootai

Wherever hypocrisy prevails in religion and religious ritual

There is a price to pay, and the messengers of death will collect it.

So, in a state of sincere devotion, sing praises of the Creator,

In such remembrance one may be liberated, even in an instant.

- Sri Guru Granth Sahib, ang 747

Seva karat hoi nehkami, tis ko hot parapet swami

That person, who serves selflessly, without desire for personal gain

Such a person finds the way to the God, the Supreme Creator.

- Sri Guru Granth Sahib, ang 286

Prepared by Bhai Sahib Ji & Gopinder Kaur Sagoo



NOSTRA AETATE CELEBRATION REFLECTION AND PRAYER

When asked, '*who is my neighbour?*' Jesus spoke of a man who went out of his way and used his own resources to assist an enemy in need and distress. Jesus' famous parable of *the Good Samaritan* taught us that a true neighbour is the one who shows mercy, and Jesus instructed listeners to, '*Go and do likewise*'. As we reflect on what Jesus teaches in this parable, we recognise that the way into a hopeful future for humankind lies in being a neighbour towards those who are not in our own family, or community, and even towards those we might consider our enemy. A hopeful future for humankind will not emerge primarily from economic growth, scientific progress, or the AI revolution. Rather, a hopeful future for humankind will emerge only from a recognition that everyone is our neighbour. All other progress, if it is to truly benefit humankind, must flow from an understand of mercy towards our neighbour.

'Merciful God, give us grace to see all others as our neighbour and to live towards our fellow human beings with mercy and compassion. Amen.'

The Rt Rev'd Dr Michael Volland, Bishop of Birmingham



THE CENTRE FOR THE ART OF LIVING AND DYING WELL

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), by 2035, the UK will experience more deaths than births. Yet, despite the fact that we are all going to die - dying remains a taboo subject in our society. At the Centre for the Art of Living and Dying Well at St Mary's University, our mission is to ensure that everyone has the knowledge, skills, and support to live well, die well, and be cared for in grief. We are dedicated to building "death literacy" through training, research, public engagement, strategic partnerships, and by contributing to communities that care.

[Artofdyingwell.org](https://www.artofdyingwell.org)

<https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/centres/the-art-of-dying-well/index.aspx>

The 'Dying to Live' discussion is based on one of the Centre's research projects detailed below.

The Ethnic Minority Faith Perspectives on Death Literacy and End-of-Life Care pilot research project explores the challenges faced by ethnic minority faith communities in Birmingham within end-of-life care healthcare settings. Based on community-based participatory research, carried out in collaboration with the Centre for the Art of Living and Dying Well - St Mary's University, Lancaster University and the Royal Marsden, this pilot study directly responds to Lord Darzi's findings about healthcare disparities in ethnic minority communities.

Participants from Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, and Sikh backgrounds detail the religious and cultural practices which communities and individuals hold dear as they near the end-of-life: the importance of sacred books/sacred verses and prayers/meditations, the giving of holy water, the importance of the placement of the body, and post-death rituals. This pilot study also highlights the challenges faced by ethnic minority faith communities in hospital/healthcare settings, including caring for the body, reciting prayers and rituals on noisy hospital wards, and insufficient space for families to gather at the bedside of a loved one.

ENHANCING DEATH LITERACY IN COMMUNITIES

The research also explores how best to enhance death literacy within ethnic minority faith communities and showcases some positive examples of death literacy in communities, as well as some challenges, including death being considered a taboo subject.

The study puts forward recommendations for healthcare and faith community settings to work together to enhance culturally sensitive end-of-life care within ethnic minority faith communities. One key recommendation is to invite healthcare workers, some of whom will be people of faith living in minority ethnic communities, to visit places of worship to understand death rituals.

The community illustration focuses on this recommendation.



FURTHER INFORMATION



www.cbcew.org.uk/interfaith-dialogue-document-2002/



www.cbcew.org.uk/meeting-god-in-friend-and-stranger/



<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/nostra-aetate/>



WITH THANKS TO ST CHAD'S CATHEDRAL CHOIR

Director – David Saint
Organists – Paul Carr and John Pryer

AND THE CHOIRS AND MUSICIANS OF



ENGLISH MARTYRS' CATHOLIC SCHOOL

As our students will tell you, English Martyrs' is a wonderful school. We are proud of our strong academic tradition, our rich, broad and varied curriculum - in and out of the classroom - and our students' outstanding achievement leading to university studies, modern apprenticeships and a wide range of careers.

In this community, we cherish each unique individual, created in God's image, and we strive to meet everyone's distinctive needs, seeking to bring out the best in everyone and to live by our motto: 'Ut Omnes Unum Sint (May They All Be One)'

We are most grateful to Bishop Patrick and all at St Chad's Cathedral for inviting us to take part in today's celebrations and for giving us such a warm welcome.

www.englishmartyrs.org



ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

St Paul's Catholic School is a warm, multi-faith, and multicultural community located in the east of Leicester. The school takes great pride in its inclusivity, welcoming students of all faith and cultures while remaining deeply rooted in its Catholic values. Guided by the mission statement and the words of Jesus — "Let your light shine before others" — St Paul's encourages every member of its community to share their unique God-given gifts and talents through learning, service, and compassion. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Bishop Patrick and all those involved in today's event for allowing us to be part of such a beautiful and meaningful service.

www.st-pauls.leicester.sch.uk/

ST CHAD'S CATHEDRAL

Welcome to St Chad's, the first Catholic Cathedral erected in Great Britain in 1841 following the Reformation of the 16th Century.

St Chad's was designed by the great Gothic Revivalist Augustus Welby Pugin, who was also responsible for the Palaces of Westminster and the iconic clock tower of Big Ben.

The Cathedral's intricate details, from its soaring arches to its elaborate stained glass windows, are a testament to Pugin's masterful command of the Gothic Revival style. This architectural gem is a source of pride for the city of Birmingham and a testament to the enduring power of faith and artistry.

The Cathedral is home to the relics of St Chad, which were originally interred in a shrine at Lichfield Cathedral in the year 672 AD.

The Cathedral celebrated its centenary in 1941 and was designated a Minor Basilica by Pope Pius XII.

St Chad's is known across the world as a beautiful building with a remarkable history and a rich heritage, but it is first and foremost a House of God.

St Chad's Cathedral serves as the Mother Church of the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham which covers five counties.

The Cathedral is the seat of the Archbishop of Birmingham, Bernard Longley, who oversees the spiritual well-being of the faithful within the diocese.

It is a place for worship and prayer, a place where we can meet God and offer him our praise and thanksgiving and bring him our needs and concern.

Canon Brian McGinley the Cathedral Dean is delighted to welcome you all today.



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