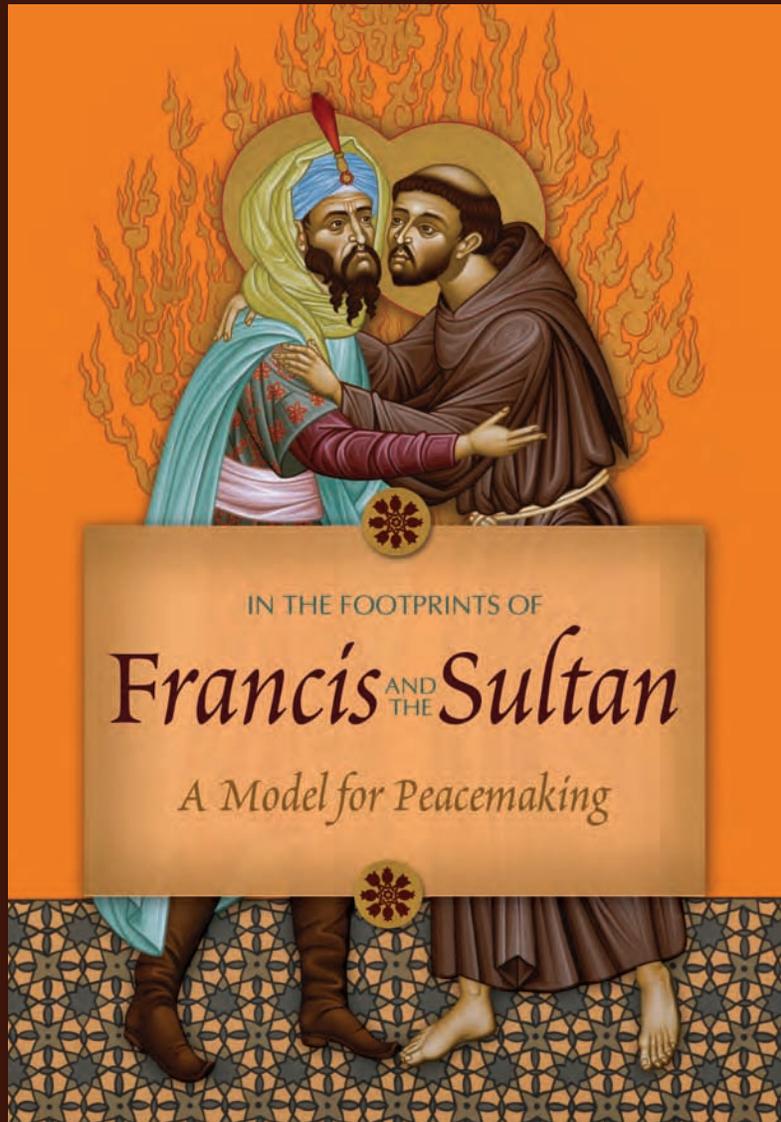


RESOURCE MATERIALS

for



KATHLEEN A. WARREN, OSF

Permission has been granted to reprint “A Remarkable Dialogue: Francis of Assisi and Sultan Malek al-Kamil,” the “Assisi Decalogue for Peace,” “Decalogue for Dialogue,” and material from John Renard’s *Responses to 101 Questions on Islam* and the JustFaith module.

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Design by Sandy L. Digman

Published by Franciscan Media
28 W. Liberty St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202
www.FranciscanMedia.org



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In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan

A Model for Peacemaking

Kathleen A. Warren, OSF

In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan: A Model for Peacemaking, a two-part DVD program, has several companion pieces that will enhance its use. This guide contains valuable resource material to augment the DVD. The resource material can be used in whatever way seems best to the group facilitator. No doubt, the creativity of the facilitator and the uniqueness of each group will merge with the suggested offerings to provide fresh, appropriate, meaningful, and productive sessions that will foster the gift of peace in our world.

Two other resources, intimately connected with the DVD yet published independently, offer even more possibilities for exploring the themes of *In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan: A Model for Peacemaking*:

1) *Daring to Cross the Threshold: Francis of Assisi Encounters Sultan Malek al-Kamil* (Wipf & Stock, 2012) was my first published work on this topic, originally printed in 2003. This 144-page book examines the historical context of the early thirteenth century and the volatile conflict between Muslims and Christians that set the stage for the remarkable encounter between the simple friar from Assisi and the powerful Sultan of Egypt. It offers an in-depth look at the encounter and its impact on Francis and, through him, on Christianity. Its concluding chapter addresses the dramatic call of the Second Vatican Council, particularly in *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions), to reassess the Church's relationship with the other religions and its obligation to open dialogues with other communities of faith. The vision of Francis found a contemporary voice in the Council and needs to be embraced and proclaimed. This book can be used with the DVD and the resource material for four to six group sessions.

2) The JustMatters module, *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan: Muslims and Christians Working Together for the Common Good*, is written by George Dardess and Marvin L. Krier Mich. It focuses on the common call of Muslims and Christians to fulfill the two great commandments God has given to both: loving God and loving neighbor. Living in such a way builds up society to reflect the intentions of God and witnesses to how humans are intended to live with one another—in peace and unity, in understanding and justice, in collaboration and neighborliness. The eight sessions are:

- Finding Common Symbols
- Developing Common Prayers
- The Fundamentals of Christian Social Justice
- The Fundamentals of Muslim Social Justice
- The Blessings of Our Religious and Cultural Sharing

- Confronting Our Demons, Past and Present
- Common Ground, Common Action
- Becoming a Sign of Social Justice

The module is available from JustFaith Ministries: http://justfaith.org/programs/justmatters-m_stfrancisandsultan.html

OUR NEED FOR DIALOGUE IN TODAY'S WORLD

Today, some suggest that the most prominent problem humankind faces is an inability to deal with pluralism. As School Sister of Notre Dame Mary Maher has stated: "We cannot escape the fact that today the entire globe is fractured by racial difference, by conflicts among different ethnic groups and nationalities, different lifestyles, orientations and philosophies of life, different cultures and religions. The inability to deal with difference except by means of hostility and violence is destroying families, cultures, societies, indeed, the planet itself." ¹

Since September 11, 2001, violence between Muslims and Christians, who together make up more than 50 percent of the world's population, has escalated, jeopardizing world peace more every day. Islamophobia and other "phobias" in the United States continue to increase rather than decline. An excerpt from a Huffington Post article identifies some of the anti-Muslim reaction from 2001 through 2012: ²

"Reports and studies demonstrate that an increasing mistrust of Muslims fueled a violent post-9/11 backlash throughout the U.S. Within a week of the terrorist attacks, Arabs, Muslims and South Asians registered more than 1,000 incidents of criminal discrimination, including murder, assault, vandalism and verbal harassment. According to crime statistics compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), anti-Muslim hate crimes in the U.S. increased by 1,600 percent between 2000 and 2001. Furthermore, a study funded by the U.S. Department of Justice found that approximately 75 percent of hate crimes are not reported in official FBI statistics.

"It is also important to note that Islamophobic violence is not a thing of the past, and unfortunately, we don't have to look far to find a tragic example. A couple of months ago, five children in San Diego lost their mother in a hate-crime. Shaima Alawadi, an Iraqi-American, was brutally beaten to death in her own home. Her daughter found her corpse in the living room, along with a note that read: 'go back to your country, you're a terrorist.'

"In August of 2010, *Time Magazine* ran an article about the controversy surrounding the construction of an Islamic center near Ground-zero, and the cover of that particular issue asked the question: 'Is America Islamophobic?'

¹ Keynote presentation to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, 2002.

² Simran Jeet Singh, "Islamophobia, Sikhophobia and Media Profiling" 7/11/2012.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/simran-jeet-singh/islamophobia-sikhophobia-and-media-profiling_b_1654692.html

“The national attention on President Obama’s religious background, the scandal related to NYPD surveillance of local Muslims, Quran burning displays in Florida—these are all recent examples of how Islamophobia operates within our society.

“Strikingly, Muslims have not been the only targets of Islamophobic violence. A number of different American communities have been impacted by Islamophobia, and practitioners of the Sikh religion make up one of the most adversely affected minority groups. The distinctive physical appearance of typical Sikh males in particular—brown skin, turban, beard—correlates with the stereotypical images of terrorists projected in western media. Scholars have described this perceived relationship as a racialization of religious identity. This process has led to a conflation of Sikhs and Muslims, and therefore, has produced a corollary to Islamophobia—Sikhophobia.

“In fact, the first casualty of a hate crime in post-9/11 America was a Sikh-American named Balbir Singh Sodhi. According to official reports, his murderer said he killed Sodhi because ‘he was dark-skinned, bearded, and wore a turban.’

“In other words, Sodhi fit the profile of ‘the Islamic other.’”

The consequences of these attitudes have been severe and costly. Since 9/11, tens of thousands of Americans have been alienated and victimized. The overly simplistic profile of “the Islamic other” has done more harm than good, and it has negatively affected Muslims and non-Muslims alike. From job discrimination and school bullying to racial profiling and police surveillance, the various manifestations of Islamophobia continue to divide the nation and increase tensions.

It’s time to leave behind our phobic tendencies and look at one another as fellow human beings.

Today there is a great need for resources to help us break down the barriers separating various groups in our society and build strong, productive relationships.

Francis’s encounter with Sultan Malek al-Kamil is one of the most important and instructive events in the life of this mendicant friar. Adopting an attitude of respect and dialogue, rather than self-righteousness and vehemence, he and his companion, Illuminato, by all accounts engaged in a sharing of faith with the sultan and his court, each presenting his belief in the one God from his own perspective.

Based on one of the lesser-known stories from the life of Francis of Assisi, *In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan* presents a paradigm for meeting those whose way of life is “unknown,” those who are “other,” those who have been demonized. This peacemaking paradigm uses the story of the 1219 encounter between Francis and the Sultan to help us negotiate our difficult interfaith encounters and other misunderstandings and hostility between peoples.

This resource material is intended to help viewers delve into the encounter between Francis and the Sultan and discover tools to build trust and relationships in bold, courageous, respectful ways. Thus, we make a contribution to bringing forth the gift of God’s peace and lessening the violence in our world. With Francis and the Sultan as teachers, understanding, courtesy, collaboration, and even friendship can reach new heights. Such is the way of peacemaking.

Prayers for Group Sessions

The Praises of God

You are holy, Lord, the only God, and your deeds
are wonderful.
You are strong.
 You are great.
 You are the Most High,
 You are almighty.
 You, holy Father, are King of heaven and earth.
You are Three and One,
 Lord God, all good.
 You are Good, all Good, supreme Good,
 Lord God, living and true.
You are love,
 You are wisdom.
 You are humility,
 You are endurance.
 You are rest,
 You are peace.
 You are joy and gladness.
 You are justice and
 moderation.
 You are all our riches,
 And you suffice for us.
You are beauty.
 You are gentleness.
 You are our protector,
 You are our guardian and defender.
 You are courage.
 You are our haven and our hope.
You are our faith,
 Our great consolation.
 You are our eternal life,
 Great and wonderful
 Lord, God almighty,
 Merciful Saviour.

Excerpted from Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies* (Cincinnati: Franciscan Media, 2008), Volume One, p. 125.

A Prayer from the Encounter

Following in the footsteps of
St. Francis of Assisi and
Sultan Malek al-Kamil,

I commit myself to

BE OPEN to the Other
BE-FRIEND Everyone
BE RESPECTFUL to All:
No Exceptions.

Salaam! Peace!

Kathleen A. Warren, OSF

Testing My Knowledge About Islam

The following series of questions are designed for you to use twice: once before embarking on your exploration of Muslim-Christian relations, and once afterward. For the pre-test, place your answers on the lines to the left of the questions. After your study, place your answers on the lines to the right of the questions. Then compare the changes and reflect on how your knowledge and perceptions have changed.

I. Regarding My Personal Experience of Islam and Muslims

Choose one of the following responses to complete the sentence below: 1) Never 2) Seldom 3) Often

Prior to this time, I have . . .

- 1) _____ talked with a Muslim about religious matters _____
- 2) _____ had some type of interaction with a Muslim _____
- 3) _____ read something substantial about Islam _____
- 4) _____ heard a talk about Islam that presented a positive picture of the religion and/or its faithful _____
- 5) _____ heard a talk that was negative toward Islam or its followers _____
- 6) _____ participated in a Muslim prayer service or other religious observance _____
- 7) _____ heard the Muslim call to prayer _____
- 8) _____ know the location of the Muslim mosque in my city _____

II. Regarding My Knowledge of Islam and Muslims

A. Select the appropriate number. Answers can be found on p. 44

- 1) _____ Islam began in the 1) 1st century BCE 2) 3rd century CE 3) 7th century CE _____
- 2) _____ Allah is 1) the Arabic word for God 2) the God Muslims alone worship 3) another name for Muhammad _____
- 3) _____ Muhammad came from what is now 1) Turkey 2) Saudi Arabia 3) Iran _____
- 4) _____ The Qur'an is 1) another name for Allah 2) Islam's sacred book 3) a prayer form _____
- 5) _____ There are presently about 1) 200,000 2) 25 million 3) 7-8 million | Muslims living in the U.S. _____
- 6) _____ Rumi is 1) a 13th-century mystical poet 2) one of the bestselling poets in the U.S. 3) founder of the whirling dervishes 4) all of the above 5) none of the above _____
- 7) _____ The root of the words *Islam* and *Muslim* comes from "S-L-M" connoting 1) wanderer 2) warrior 3) wholeness 4) submission _____
- 8) _____ The country with the largest Muslim population in the world is 1) Saudi Arabia 2) Iran 3) Indonesia 4) Egypt _____
- 9) _____ Muslims believe Muhammad was 1) a prophet 2) a god 3) a politician and merchant _____
- 10) _____ Muslims are encouraged to pray 1) once 2) 3 times 3) 5 times | a day. _____
- 11) _____ When Muslims pray, they turn toward 1) Mecca 2) Medina 3) Jerusalem 4) Baghdad _____

- 12) _____ A Sufi is **1)** a harvest festival **2)** a Muslim cleric **3)** one who practices a specific form of Muslim mysticism _____
- 13) _____ There are about **1)** 200 million **2)** 400 million **3)** a billion | Muslims worldwide. _____
- 14) _____ The Mother Mosque of America (1934) is located in **1)** Dearborn, Michigan **2)** Cedar Rapids, Iowa **3)** Los Angeles, California **4)** New York, New York _____

B. Check all those you consider to be true.

- 1) _____ Muhammad is a deity worshiped by Muslims. _____
- 2) _____ Jesus, Moses, and Abraham are all important figures for Muslims. _____
- 3) _____ Muslim beliefs were mostly borrowed from Judaism and Christianity. _____
- 4) _____ Most Muslims are Arabs. _____
- 5) _____ Mary, the mother of Jesus, is hardly mentioned in the Qur'an. _____
- 6) _____ Islam is as misunderstood today by Christians as it was in the 13th century. _____
- 7) _____ The Islamic concept of "jihad" is primarily spiritual. _____
- 8) _____ Islam does not condone terrorism any more than does Christianity. _____
- 9) _____ There are probably very few Muslims living in my city. _____
- 10) _____ On Saturday, Muslims gather for communal worship presided over by a caliph. _____
- 11) _____ The Qur'an is roughly the size of the New Testament. _____
- 12) _____ There is greater tolerance for Muslims in the U.S. today than there was before 9/11. _____
- 13) _____ News coverage about Muslims strikes me as being biased against them. _____
- 14) _____ I would consider joining a Muslim-Christian dialogue group. _____
- 15) _____ I would consider starting a Muslim-Christian dialogue group. _____

Questions I have about Islam:

Adapted from John Renard's *Responses to 101 Questions on ISLAM*, Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 1998.

Testing My Knowledge About Christianity

The following series of questions are designed for you to use twice: once before embarking on your exploration of Muslim-Christian relations, and once afterward. For the pre-test, place your answers on the lines to the left of the questions. After your study, place your answers on the lines to the right of the questions. Then compare the changes and reflect on how your knowledge and perceptions have changed.

I. Regarding My Personal Experience of Christianity and Christians

Choose one of the following responses to complete the sentence below: 1) Never 2) Seldom 3) Often

Prior to this time, I have . . .

- 1) _____ talked with a Christian about religious matters _____
- 2) _____ had some type of interaction with a Christian _____
- 3) _____ read something substantial about Christianity _____
- 4) _____ heard a talk about Christianity that presented a positive picture of the religion and/or its faithful _____
- 5) _____ heard a talk that was negative toward Christianity or its followers _____
- 6) _____ participated in a Christian prayer service or other religious observance _____
- 7) _____ know the location of a Christian church in my city _____

II. Regarding My Knowledge of Christianity and Christians

A. Select the appropriate number. Answers can be found on p. 45

- 1) _____ Christianity began in the **1) 1st century BCE** **2) 1st century CE** **3) 7th century CE** _____
- 2) _____ Allah is **1) the God Muslims alone worship** **2) the God Christians alone worship** **3) the God Muslims, Christians, and Jews worship** _____
- 3) _____ Jesus came from what is now **1) Turkey** **2) Egypt** **3) Israel** _____
- 4) _____ The Bible is **1) a history book** **2) Christianity's sacred book** **3) a prayer form** _____
- 5) _____ There are presently about **1) 247 million** **2) 26 million** **3) 2.5 million** | Christians living in the U.S. _____
- 6) _____ The root of the word *Christian* (from "Christ") means **1) peace** **2) the anointed one** **3) Christmas** _____
- 7) _____ The country with the largest Christian population in the world is **1) Mexico** **2) Brazil** **3) the United States** **4) Ireland** _____
- 8) _____ Christians believe Jesus was **1) a prophet** **2) divine** **3) a holy man** **4) all of the above** **5) none of the above** _____
- 9) _____ The holiest time of the year for Christians is **1) summer** **2) Holy Week** **3) Christmas** _____
- 10) _____ The New Testament contains **1) two** **2) four** **3) six** **4) eight** | Gospels _____
- 11) _____ A bishop is **1) a holy day** **2) a Christian cleric** **3) always a male** _____
- 12) _____ There are about **1) 500 million** **2) 1.2 billion** **3) 2.1 billion** | Christians worldwide _____
- 13) _____ Christians worship in **1) temples** **2) churches** **3) synagogues** _____

B. Check all those you consider to be true.

- 1) _____ Christ is believed to be both fully human and fully divine. _____
- 2) _____ Jesus, Moses, and Abraham are all important figures for Christians. _____
- 3) _____ The country with the most Christians is Mexico. _____
- 4) _____ Mary, the mother of Jesus, is mentioned more in the New Testament than she is mentioned in the Qur'an. _____
- 5) _____ Diversity within Christianity is misunderstood today by the majority of Muslims. _____
- 6) _____ Christianity does not condone terrorism any more than does Islam. _____
- 7) _____ Christians usually gather for communal worship on Sunday, because it is the first day of creation. _____
- 8) _____ The New Testament is roughly the size of the Qur'an. _____
- 9) _____ There is greater tolerance between Muslims and Christians in the United States today than there was before 9/11. _____
- 10) _____ News coverage about Christians strikes me as frequently being biased against them. _____
- 11) _____ I would consider joining a Muslim-Christian dialogue group. _____
- 12) _____ I would consider starting a Muslim-Christian dialogue group. _____

Questions I have about Christianity:

A REMARKABLE DIALOGUE

FRANCIS OF ASSISI AND SULTAN MALEK AL-KAMIL

The following could have been part of a dialogue between Francis and al-Kamil in Damietta in 1219. Consider having the two conversationalists, Francis and the Sultan, seated at a table facing each other, reading their remarks. The language is meant to be natural and not stilted or formalized.



Sultan: I am a bit surprised you made it through the front lines to reach me, holy man.

Francis: I am a bit surprised to see you myself, Sultan, sir—I thought I was certain to suffer the martyr's fate.

Sultan: I assure you, it was not out of the question.

Francis: And martyrdom comes at such a great cost!

Sultan: Unfortunately, both of us have long traditions of martyrs. I have learned that martyrdom is never a virtue in itself, however.

Francis: Indeed. My brothers have been trying to convince you and your people for over five years now to give up your resistance and give in to the faith of Jesus Christ. In Morocco, over three years ago, some paid the price.

Sultan: From what I hear, they were awfully insistent about converting the Moroccans. They roused up the people who readily facilitated the martyrdom they sought.

Francis: Right—that's the point. Martyrs seldom get the leisure of having a long, heartfelt chat with their adversaries. If they spoke to one another and learned to respect one another, maybe martyrdom would be as archaic as building pyramids.

Sultan: So you have come to chat?

Francis: I don't see any other way to reach understanding, do you?

Sultan: But aside from trying to convert each other to the true faith, what do we have to talk about?

Francis: The story of your wisdom precedes you. You studied among us; you are friends with our emperor; you have a thirst for knowledge and truth. I know you have much I can learn.

Sultan: So you have come to learn and not to teach?

Francis: Is there anywhere a better teacher than the one who knows how to learn?

Sultan: For a little man, you yourself have some experience of wisdom!

Francis: I'm not sure of that. Just walking in here, I had a thousand questions: Why were your soldiers so courteous to me? Why were you letting me pass each checkpoint? Why did they all pause for prayer in the middle of our journey to your camp? Why did they have these beads in their hands? Why did they bow to me with reverence? Why did their faith seem so genuine...

Sultan: Yes, yes, I understand: You have a lot of questions.

Francis: That is pretty much what I'm bringing. A person without questions is a person with his eyes shut, it seems to me.

Sultan: I always thought, on the contrary, that you Christians had all the answers! Though, of course, I know you hardly have a lock on self-righteous fanatics!

Francis: I dare say your response shows signs of humility—a virtue of which I'm quite fond. Why *do* we create such simple answers to such complicated questions?

Sultan: Both of us are fighting to defend our holy lands from desecration. The problem is that you believe we are desecrating them now, and we are repulsed by the thought that you may win them over and desecrate them all the more! The battle goes on! Theoretically, given sufficient resources of money and hate, we could continue this battle, killing one ungodly pagan after another (depending on who the pagans are, of course) until we have no one left except you and I standing here. At that point, who would win?

Francis: What profit is there in winning?

Sultan: If I win, then I will be sure that Allah is praised and that all people will worship him alone.

Francis: Obviously then, you do not want peace—only victory.

Sultan: And what is the difference? If we can call an end to this ghastly fratricide—because that's what it is, you know—if we can stop this senseless slaughter, we will finally have peace.

Francis: But Sultan, sir, you can't in your right mind believe that *peace* is as simple as *victory*—as though there will be a time when there would be no more conflict. Your "victory" will bring only hatred and continued attempts at revenge—not peace. You know already that neither victory *nor* peace happens when one side supposedly "wins."

Sultan: I am up against a bigger enemy than I had imagined!

Francis: You are up against only a brother.

Sultan: If only! If only we could act from the knowledge of being from the same Creator! If only we could see one another through the eyes of the Great and Holy One.

Francis: Now you are beginning to speak sense. You have finally stopped talking about winning games and decided to talk about reality.

Sultan: Reality? The blood I see every day is real. It pours out of the sons and the husbands and the uncles of real men. Even if their thoughts before death had been of anger or hatred or justice to the forces of hate, I can assure you their final thoughts were none of those. As life slipped by, they must surely have said, "At what cost?" *Reality* is a word that is forbidden on the battle field. If we thought of reality, we would not be greeting one another in these trenches from hell. We would all be headed home to the ones we love in the safety we cherish.

Francis: A safety that is only precarious and deceptive, if you don't mind me saying, Sultan. A safety for what? From what? For how long? If we are not at peace with our God and do not know the wisdom of love for our neighbor—all neighbors—we will never have the security that comes only from loving them both: God and neighbor. Oddly, I have found that security comes only when I am *not* secure—when I live and serve the other through what the other wishes and desires of me.

Sultan: There is something profound in that altruism! When will our consciences grow so tender that we will act to *prevent* human misery rather than *avenge* it?

Francis: I do see, at least, that you and I have a common goal: to keep God *out* of this ghastly war fought in the Almighty's name!

Sultan: Why do we glorify the games we play by claiming some divine warrant?

Francis: At least now we are talking about real peace.

Sultan: And real victory!

Francis: Can anyone win if our God loses?

Sultan: And can Allah ever claim a victory when his sons and daughters are slaughtered in agony?

Francis: See! So you have questions too! If only our world had the courage to live its questions. I know that you recognize my Lord and Master as a great prophet, and I know that you can appreciate God's holy Word to us: unless we die to ourselves to live for God and our neighbor, unless a seed falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat—doomed to be stuck in the ground.

Sultan: And if it dies, it is really born—to a life above ground.

Francis: Yes. Love didn't die on the cross—it simply chose not to fight, and gave birth to a love that would never die.

Sultan: A real and eternal love—the love of the Creator, holding precious every precious particle of what the Creator envisions.

Francis: Speaking of what the Creator envisions, is it not all summed up in one word, one reality: *peace*—one of the names of God?

Sultan: Indeed! It is indeed, and our dialogue helps me believe that peace can be possible. For that I praise Allah!

Francis: Yes! Our conversation raises many more glorious questions in me about God's goodness, beyond limits I had never thought possible! I so desire to search for answers. Questions always lead me to places I've never been—and to people as precious as you.

Sultan: Few are the men from whom I can hear those words and trust their sincerity.

Francis: Sultan, I am a poor man. I have nothing to offer you except my honesty.

Sultan: Then I thank you in all humility. Had I not allowed you into the camp tonight, I'd never have realized how precious a Christian can be.

Francis: Who knows what we can discover when we let ourselves explore?

Sultan: And what is exploring except the voyage we can all make as we enter into the mystery of Allah—always more than we think possible.

Francis: Yes! There is so much mystery and majesty in our good God! Praise comes so easily to the lips of those who recognize both the complexity and the simplicity of God.

Sultan: Indeed! Together let us praise—and explore—our good and merciful God, shall we?

Together Francis and the Sultan pray:

You are the One God who does wonderful things.

*You are love, charity; You are wisdom, humility,
You are patience, You are beauty, You are meekness,
You are security, You are rest.*

You who are The Benevolent, The Just, the Mild.
You who are The Infinitely good, The Merciful, The All-Forgiving.
You who are the Nourisher, the Generous, the Loving-kind.

All praise is Yours, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate One.

*You are gladness and joy and our hope.
You are justice, moderation, and all our riches to sufficiency.
You are the protector, You are our custodian and defender.*

You who are The Truth, The Strong, The Praised.
You who are The Life-Giver, The Restorer, The Living.
You who are The Magnificent, The Eternal, All-Powerful, and Holy.

All praise is Yours, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate One.

*You are strength, refreshment, You are our hope,
You are our faith, our charity,
You are all our sweetness, You are our eternal life.*

You who are The Guardian, The Faithful, The Protector.
You who are the Light, the Guide, the all-Seeing.
You are Good, all Good, the Highest God: Great and Wonderful God, Almighty God.

All praise is Yours, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate One.

Kathleen A. Warren, OSF and John Petrikovic, OFM Cap

WEBSITES

Websites related to interreligious issues provide a wealth of timely information. Consider spending time on sites such as the following, and discussing the information provided.

Visit the Vatican website for Interreligious Dialogue

www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/index.htm).

Read the Ramadan greeting for the current year. How does it foster mutual understanding and respect between Muslims and Christians? What parts of the statement do you find challenging? In what ways might you implement its message?

While you are on this website, read some of the messages regarding other world religions. Discuss what you find there and what surprises you.

Read the document: "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct." Discuss the document, reflecting upon what you find affirming and what challenges you.

Visit: "A Common Word"

(www.acommonword.com). What has been your past awareness of this interfaith initiative? Why do you think news about such a significant international event does not appear frequently in the media? How might you use some of the "Common Word" material to promote interreligious understanding in your area? Another link you may wish to visit is the Yale Center for Faith & Culture on "A Common Word": www.yale.edu/faith/acw/acw.htm.

Visit one of these Islamic websites:

- Council on American-Islamic Relations (<http://www.cair.com>)
- Islamic Society of North America (<http://www.isna.net>)
- The Institute of Interfaith Dialog (<http://www.interfaithdialog.org>).

Read one or more of the entries about a current event. What new information or awareness does this material offer you? What is your response to this report? What commonalities and differences are you aware of in the way this material is shared and the way it is related in a popular U.S. newspaper or national media outlet?

Search the Web to discover sites related to other world religions and interreligious efforts.

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Additional Websites

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Bible and Koran (www.bibleandkoran.net)

Catholic Encyclopedia (www.newadvent.org/cathen/)

Charter for Compassion (<http://charterforcompassion.org>)

Council on American-Islamic Relations (<http://www.cair.com>)

Dialogue Institute (<http://institute.iesdialogue.org>)

Franciscan Action Network (<http://www.franciscanaction.org>)

The Institute of Interfaith Dialog (<http://www.interfaithdialog.org>)

IslamiCity (www.islamicity.com/education/understandingislamandmuslims/)

The Islamic Society of North America (<http://www.isna.net>)

Pax Christi (<http://paxchristiusa.org>)

Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue
(www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/index.htm)

Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Christian-Muslim Understanding, Georgetown University
(<http://cmcu.georgetown.edu>)

Rumi Forum (<http://www.rumiforum.org>)

Spirito de Assisi—celebrations (<http://spiritodiassisi.wordpress.com>)

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs
(www.usccb.org/about/ecumenical-and-interreligious-affairs/)

PART I

The Story

A Place to Begin: Principles of Dialogue

Part 1 of *In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan* opens with two religious leaders providing some basic principles about interreligious dialogue, or interreligious relations.

Imam Yahya Hendi quotes from the Qur'an: "Oh people of the book," meaning Jews and Christians, "come to a mutual understanding between us and you."

Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald states: "You have to be patient.... That requires an effort on your part also to understand their position properly and a readiness to begin again."

As you begin your exploration into interreligious dialogue/relations, you might want to consider some basic principles that will guide your discussions. Suggested materials for this include:

1. "Some Principles for Interreligious Dialogue" (Leonard Swidler)
2. "Assisi Decalogue for Peace" (Assisi, 2002)
3. "Decalogue for Dialogue" (Build With Living Stones)

Websites for further information:

- CPS International Center for Peace and Spirituality International:
<http://www.cpsglobal.org/content/inter-faith-dialogue-islam>
- Dialogue Institute: <http://institute.jesdialogue.org>
- Scarboro Missions:
http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Interfaith_dialogue/guidelines_interfaith.php
- Contemplative Network: <http://www.contemplative.net/interfaith-dialogue-a-39.html>

Some Principles for Interreligious Dialogue

[Adapted from Leonard Swidler, "The Dialogue Decalogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 20/1:1-4.]

1. Enter into dialogue so that *you* can learn and grow; not to change the other.
2. Be conscious of the need to allow people the space to enter the discussion. Some people are more sheepish about offering their thoughts but will be encouraged to do so if more outspoken persons avoid dominating the exchange.
3. Everyone must be honest and sincere, even if that means revealing discomforts with your own tradition or that of the other. Everyone must assume that everyone else is being equally honest and sincere.
4. Everyone must be permitted to define their own religious experience and identity, and this must be respected by others.
5. Proselytizing or seeking to "convert" the conversation partner is not permitted in an interreligious-dialogue setting. Participants should feel free to express their own faith traditions and beliefs but not try to persuade others to assent to them.
6. Don't feel that you are the spokesperson for your entire faith tradition or that you ought somehow to know everything there is to know about it. Admit any confusion or uncertainty you might have if a puzzling question arises.
7. Don't assume in advance where points of agreement or disagreement will exist.
8. Everyone should be willing to be self-critical.
9. All should strive to experience the other's faith "from within" and be prepared to view themselves differently as a result of an "outside" perspective.
10. Trust is a must.

ASSISI DECALOGUE FOR PEACE

During the interfaith prayer service at Assisi, ten of the 200 faith representatives each read one of the following ten commitments in their own language. In March, Pope John Paul sent a copy of the Decalogue for Peace to all heads of state. In an accompanying letter, the Pope stated that the participants at the Assisi gathering were inspired more than ever by one common conviction — humanity must choose between love and hatred.

1. We commit ourselves to proclaiming our firm conviction that violence and terrorism are opposed to all true religious spirit and we condemn all recourse to violence and war in the name of God or religion. We undertake to do everything possible to eradicate the causes of terrorism.
2. We commit ourselves to educate people about respect and mutual esteem in order to achieve peaceful coexistence and solidarity among members of different ethnic groups, cultures and religions.
3. We commit ourselves to promote the culture of dialogue so that understanding and trust may develop among individuals and peoples as these are the conditions of authentic peace.
4. We commit ourselves to defend the right of all human beings to lead a dignified life, in accordance with their cultural identity.
5. We commit ourselves to engage in dialogue with sincerity and patience, without considering what separates us as an insurmountable wall, on the contrary, recognizing that facing our differences can become an occasion for greater reciprocal understanding.
6. We commit ourselves to pardon each other's errors and prejudices of the past and present, and to support one another in the common struggle against egoism and abuses, hatred and violence, and in order to learn from the past that peace without justice is not true peace.
7. We commit ourselves to stand at the side of those who suffer poverty and abandonment, speaking out for those who have no voice and taking concrete action to overcome such situations, in the conviction that no one can be happy alone.
8. We commit ourselves to make our own the cry of those who do not surrender to violence and evil, and we wish to contribute with all our strength to give a real hope of justice and peace to the humanity of our time.
9. We commit ourselves to encourage all initiatives that promote friendship between peoples, in the conviction that, if a solid understanding between peoples is lacking, technological progress exposes the world to increasing dangers of destruction and death.
10. We commit ourselves to ask the leaders of nations to make every possible effort so as to build, at both national and international levels, a world of solidarity and peace founded on justice.



DECALOGUE FOR DIALOGUE ³

The diversity with which we live in a pluralistic society of course is not merely religious. It is also a diversity of races, cultures, and political and moral perspectives, to use but a few examples. This *Decalogue* can be utilized in all circumstances and can be summarized in one over-riding principle:

God created this individual for whom I must have the utmost respect and reverence, which are virtues far beyond simple tolerance.

“Sincere dialogue” implies, on the one hand, mutual acceptance of differences or contradictions, and on the other, respect for the free decision of persons taken according to the dictates of their conscience. In that spirit, we can offer a *Decalogue of Rules for Franciscan Dialogue* that might help us to fulfill our mission in a pluralistic society:

1. Franciscan dialogue is animated by contemplative consciousness.
2. Enter the dialogue as a *minore*, avoiding quarrels and disputes while being subject to all (ER 16).
3. Be honest and upright, bearing witness that you are a Christian (ER 16) [or, the follower of one’s chosen faith tradition].
4. Trust in the other, accepting his or her honesty and uprightness.
5. Live among others with different faith and life views without fear or suspicion.
6. Seize the initiative, as Pope Paul VI says: “We must be the first to ask people for a conversation, not waiting for them to request an encounter with us.”
7. Share the Good News in word and deed, showing that this news is good more by what you do than by what you say.
8. Work for the betterment of your world, especially of those in need.
9. Seek “to understand rather than be understood,” especially in your ability to listen.
10. Be an instrument of peace.

³ Trevor Thompson, ed., *Build With Living Stones* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute, 2001), Unit 8, pp. 9–10.

Background Material Related to the Encounter between Francis and the Sultan

Primary source material about the encounter is found in the three-volume set, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*. References to the story of Francis and the Sultan are found in the following texts:

Volume 1:

1 Celano 20:57, pp. 229–234

Writings of Jacques deVitry, pp. 580–580 and pp. 584–585

Volume 2:

2 Celano 30, pp. 265–266

Major Legend of St. Francis by St. Bonaventure 9:5-8, pp. 600–604; also 11:3, p. 614

Volume 3:

The Little Flowers of St. Francis 24, pp. 605–607

Daring to Cross the Threshold: Francis of Assisi Encounters Sultan Malek al-Kamil by Kathleen Warren, OSF, examines the encounter, as do other books listed in the bibliography.

Delve into the historical situation of the Fifth Crusade. Scholars are not in agreement as to whether Francis supported the Crusade or not, or whether he went to the Muslims in hopes of achieving martyrdom. However, for those who understand Francis’s vision of universal fraternity, there can be little doubt that Francis opposed the ruthless violence and sought peace in the midst of war. Indeed, Francis held a very uncommon position toward Islam and the Muslims and the Crusades in contrast to the position of the Church authorities (Warren, Hoeberichts, and Moses address this.)

Consider the world of Francis and the Sultan in the thirteenth century. What similarities do you find regarding the situation between Muslims and Christians in the thirteenth century and today?

What does understanding the historical context of the remarkable encounter between Francis and the Sultan add to the meaning and message of this account?

Where do you get information about Muslims and world conflicts? Are those sources adequate for a well-rounded, wisely informed perception? What other sources are available to you to offer a bigger picture?

In the DVD we heard about the dramatic change in Francis’s life that happened because of his encounter with the leper. Francis himself tells us in his Testament,⁴ that prior to his conversion, it was “bitter” for him to

⁴ Close to death, recalling the most precious and noteworthy event of his life in order to clarify the direction and legacy he is leaving his followers, Francis dictates his last Testament and gave primacy of place to his encounter among the lepers. The dynamic of conversion Francis identified is itself a radically new concept. It is a relational dynamic that happens by turning out of oneself toward the other. It is a concept that allows us to find God in the midst of the world as we are open to the gift of the other, and to the truth that they hold. This call to continual conversion will remain a hallmark of Francis and his brothers and will constantly involve newness—a process of unlearning and learning anew, of dropping old habits and taking on new ones.

even see lepers. And then, there was a day when God led Francis right into the midst of the lepers, where Francis showed mercy to them. After that he says, “what had seemed bitter was turned into sweetness.” This life-altering event, initiated by God, resulted in a huge conversion, a major turnaround for Francis. Prior to this experience with the leper(s), Francis was enamored with the finer things of life: good food, a lively social life, grand clothing, the respect and honor associated with wealth (which he also enjoyed), and military accomplishments. Indeed, as a teenager, Francis had been involved in the civil war in his commune, a war that resulted in banishing the feudal lords to the neighboring city of Perugia. After that, in a war between Perugia and Assisi, Francis was taken prisoner and spent a year in a cold, dark, miserable cell. After his release, Francis still entertained dreams of becoming a knight and fighting in the army of the emperor. All of that changed totally when Francis looked into the face of the leper and saw the face of God. It was an incredible conversion and his entire life was changed.

Francis lived into his new identity, rooted in the person of Jesus Christ, the one who was brother to each person on earth, without exception. From that awareness Francis knew that the core of his life was connected not to war, but to reconciliation, to peacemaking. Francis believed in dismantling walls between people and building bridges of acceptance, of respect. He was all about being brother to every other person, without exception. And he saw each other person as brother or sister to him, without exception. The experience that began with his embrace of the leper was so profound that it marked the rest of his life and defined his vocation, his mission. It is what eventually took him to the camp of the Sultan.

Disorienting dilemmas or events cause people to rethink their values, their behaviors, even their worldviews. After his encounter with the leper, Francis reframed his way of living in the world. Can you think of other people who have had such life-changing experiences? Who are they? What has caused you to change previously held beliefs, perceptions, worldviews? What might do that?

Through a complete reversal of values, the unequal distribution of the goods of the world became a situation Francis no longer could tolerate, much less participate in. Francis and his brothers stepped away from that reality and set out to redefine the world, from the perspective of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

When Francis and the brothers declared their solidarity (brotherhood/sisterhood) with the lepers and the poor, they proposed a drastically different worldview. Francis changed his location, his context. He moved outside of Assisi and lived with the lepers. Context is critical. What one knows and sees depends on where one stands. Francis saw a different world among the lepers; he discovered the world of relationships and the meaning of “family” and “home.” There he found Good News, God, and the desire of his heart. Walter Brueggemann’s insights regarding the power of imagination seem to apply to Francis and can be helpful as we look to Francis for finding new approaches for dealing with detrimental worldviews and behavior, indeed as we dare to redefine the world.

As Francis entered history, the world order that had been accepted for centuries was ending. Emerging communes were replacing feudal structures. Papal armies were fighting the armies of the emperor. New commerce and currencies were placing power in the hands of a new class of people: merchants. Islam was threatening Christianity and no longer could be looked upon as simply a heresy. Religious divisions within Christianity were growing more dangerous instead of being reconciled. Indeed, change was needed. What allowed Francis to offer such a radically different, revolutionary approach to life was his openness and surrender to the divine gift of imagination.

Brueggemann defines imagination as “simply the human capacity to picture, portray, receive, and practice the world in ways other than it appears to be at first glance when seen through a dominant, habitual, unexamined lens. More succinctly, imagination as the quintessential human act is a valid way of knowing.”⁵ It offers a valid way of getting in touch with the deepest desires of the human heart, which find their fulfillment in God’s plan. Francis was gifted with imagination, which allowed him to know as God knew; to see as Jesus saw. Thus, he lived differently. And because he knew (saw) a different truth, he could not buy into the myth of living in a way that deprived the majority of the basic goods of life that were generously provided for all by a gracious God. Francis knew that truth and saw that vision—the vision presented in the Bible that he had studied; it was nothing less than the vision of God’s original creation.

The genius of Francis was that he simply offered an alternative to a system in need of change. People change not through coercion but when they are offered a new model or image or are shown a different way of putting the pieces of life together. “Transformation,” says Brueggemann, “is the slow, steady process of inviting each other into a counterstory about God, world, neighbor, and self. This slow, steady process has as counterpoint the subversive process of unlearning and disengaging from a story we find no longer to be credible or adequate.”⁶ It is all about redefining the world or restoring the original world, the one intended by God from the beginning.

Francis awakened, after many dreams, to see a different world—a world renewed by lives of compassion, mercy, kindness, tenderness, courtesy, respect; in other words, a Beatitude life, centered in the cross of Jesus Christ. His was an imagination that ignited the hearts of many others, including many today. His intuitions gave him special insight about:

- desiring to know and to do what God wants
- surrendering to the will of God
- allowing God to turn one toward the other
- being willing to unlearn and learn anew
- accepting the centrality of relationships (particularly familial relationships)
- understanding the primacy of action over words

These suggest some basic building blocks for ongoing conversion for those who desire to build a better world, especially a world in which persons long to see the other, not as a threat or an enemy, but truly as a friend, and even more, a brother or sister.

This was the unique understanding of conversion (lifelong turning toward God) that directed and sustained the life of Francis and the early Franciscan movement. It had profound implications for its mission of peace, and its vision of universal fraternity that was articulated by Francis.

Too often we think that conversion means changing the mind or the religion of another to agree with one’s own perspective or religion—or being changed from one’s own stance to that of the other. If that is what conversion is, neither Francis nor the Sultan was converted. Yet, Francis seems to have experienced a

⁵ Walter Brueggemann, *Texts Under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) p. 13.

⁶ Brueggemann, p. 25.

profound conversion, and that also could have been true for the Sultan. How was this done? It was a conversion rooted in the new experience Francis had in the Sultan's camp. It was a conversion to a whole new truth, a deeper truth, a bigger truth than either of them had known before.

Share any experience from your life that moved you from one viewpoint to another, from one position to another. What factors helped that shift to occur?

Did the DVD provide any information about Sultan Malek al-Kamil that surprised you? Can you imagine an extended conversation between Francis and the Sultan actually taking place? What does it take to stay in such a conversation (particularly when speaking through interpreters!)? Have you ever conversed with someone who spoke a different language than you speak? What was it like? What motivates one to stay in such a conversation? What is learned by staying in the conversation? What kind of a relationship exists between conversation and conversion?

Discussion/reflection questions after viewing the DVD:

1. Did I hear any new information that stretches my horizon?
2. What attitudes or behaviors of mine have been affirmed?
3. What has been challenged?
4. What experience of being "the other" have I had?
5. How have I understood "conversion"? What new insights do I have about it now? What questions do I have?
6. Have I ever befriended an enemy? Have I ever acted nonviolently where violence was expected? What was the impact on me?
7. What kind of a listener am I? When do I listen well? When do I have a hard time listening? What can I do to cultivate greater listening skills?
8. What does my imagination say to me about interreligious encounters?
9. Which of the building blocks identified above might be asking for my attention at this time? Are there other blocks to add to this list?
10. Is there a situation in my workplace that the 1219 encounter might address? What are the common elements? What new response can I imagine offering?

DISCOVERING COMMON GROUND

FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

A succinct overview of the core of Islam is contained in its Five Pillars:

1. Profession of faith (*shahada*)
 - a. This is the deceptively simple affirmation of faith: “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God.”
 - b. Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam professes a radical monotheism in which the doctrine of the oneness of God is central.
2. Observance of five brief but regular prayer times marking sacred moments of the day (*salat*)
 - a. These occur from early morning to late in the evening.
 - b. They include ritual purification (cleansing) and prostrations.
3. Almsgiving (*zakat*)
 - a. Islam’s strong awareness of social justice requires that Muslims be generous to the less fortunate.
 - b. It is believed that the wealth one enjoys is a gift “on loan” from God and is intended to be shared with those in need.
4. Fasting (*sawm*)
 - a. A rigorous and lengthy period of fasting occurs during the ninth lunar month, called Ramadan.
 - b. Refraining from all food and drink from sunrise to sunset is meant to remind people that only God can fulfill human needs. This also invites a sense of solidarity with those who do not regularly have food to eat, resulting in a deeper compassion for all.
5. Pilgrimage (*hajj*)
 - a. Muslims who have good health and sufficient means are asked to make a pilgrimage to Mecca once during their lifetime.
 - b. Millions gather between the ninth and thirteenth days of the twelfth lunar month and express their solidarity with one another and their commitment to God.

During his time in the Levant, particularly during the weeks he spent in the camp of the Sultan, Francis would have experienced some of the main tenets and practices of Islam. Unaware of any of these pieces of the unknown and misrepresented faith of the Muslims, Francis must have been quite astonished at what he discovered about this unfamiliar and demonized religion and its faithful. This is probably not so different from the reaction to many in the U.S. today after their initial exposure to Islam.

Francis might have encountered other significant elements of the Islamic faith, such as:

1. Reverence for the Name of God
 - a. Specifically by Muslims’ praying of the 99 Beautiful Names of God on their beads
 - b. Francis might have heard that the two most common names of God are “Mercy” and “Compassion”
2. The primacy of God’s Word, the Qur’an
 - a. Francis probably experienced the attentive listening to God as Muslims savored the Word on their tongue
 - b. And their complete respect for the written Word, in the beautiful calligraphy that decorates their mosques
3. The Greater Jihad
 - a. Not an outer struggle against a physical enemy but an inner struggle with self—in order to surrender to God’s will, thereby entering into God’s peace
 - b. Resulting in being more merciful and compassionate, as God is

Contrary to the popular beliefs about Muslims that Francis would have been exposed to at home, he probably found Muslims to be believing, praying, peace-filled people. No doubt the greeting so dear to Francis, “May God give you peace,” was well received in the court of the Sultan, and the Muslims’ peace greeting, “Assalam aleikum,” must have thrilled Francis. (Translation: “May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you” or, simply, “peace and blessing be with you.”)

Are there any surprises for you in what defines the core components of Islamic belief and practice? What is new to you? Do you see any common ground between your tradition and Islam? Does this cause you to readjust any of your thoughts, impressions, or attitudes toward Islam or Muslims? What else does this type of information say to you?

This segment of the DVD invites viewers to spend time in exploring the tenets of both Islam and Christianity. Websites to assist with this research:

Bible and Koran (www.bibleandkoran.net)

Catholic Encyclopedia (www.newadvent.org/cathen/)

Council on American-Islamic Relations (<http://www.cair.com>)

The Institute of Interfaith Dialog (<http://www.interfaithdialog.org>)

IslamiCity (www.islamicity.com/education/understandingislamandmuslims/)

The Islamic Society of North America (<http://www.isna.net>)

Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue
(www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/index.htm)

Rumi Forum (<http://www.rumiforum.org>)

Spirito de Assisi—celebrations (<http://spiritodiassisi.wordpress.com>)

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs
(www.usccb.org/about/ecumenical-and-interreligious-affairs/)

After Francis returned to Assisi, a number of his writings might indicate how influenced he was during the time he spent among the Muslims.

His two *Letters to the Custodians*, his *Letter to the Rulers of the People*, and his *Letter to the Entire Order* refer to such actions as a general call to prayer for all the people, the use of prostrations and other body positions during prayer, and reverence for the name of God. Surely these were impressive parts of the daily life of the Muslims in Egypt.

In Chapter 16 of his *Earlier Rule*, Francis writes about how the brothers are to conduct themselves as they live and minister among the Muslims.

The prayer he wrote on parchment (*chartula*) after receiving the stigmata on Mount La Verna in 1224, *The Praises of God*, bears a striking resemblance in style to the popular Muslim prayer, the 99 Beautiful Names of God. Is there a connection between the two prayers?

A story is even recounted about how Francis made a decision as to which route to follow when a path divided. He instructed his companion, Masseo, to twirl around until he was so dizzy he fell down. After falling, the direction in which Masseo pointed was the direction in which the two friars proceeded! Might that have anything to do with the whirling dervishes and their abandonment to?

(These writings of Francis can be found in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, volume 1.)

You might want to look at the correlation between the 99 Beautiful Names of God and *The Praises of God*. What insights into God come from reflecting on the names of God from another religious tradition?

99 Beautiful Names of God	Arabic Word	Meaning	Francis' Praises of God
1. God (The greatest of the 99 names)	Allah	The true existent, the one who unites the attributes of divinity	You are holy Lord, The only God, Who does wonders ⁷
2. The Infinitely Good	Al-Rahman	God's mercy is both perfect and inclusive, embracing both the deserving and undeserving; a mercy beyond the powers of people	You are Good, all Good, supreme Good
3. The Merciful	Al-Rahim		Merciful Saviour
4. The King	Al-Malik	The one who has no needs, while every existing thing needs him	You are almighty
5. The Holy	Al-Quddus	The one who transcends every attribute of perfection	You are holy, Lord, the only God, and your deeds are wonderful
6. The Flawless	Al-Salam	The one whose essence is free from defect	
7. The Faithful	Al-Mu'min	The one alone who possesses security and safety	You are endurance You are rest
8. The Guardian	Al-Muhaymin	The one who tends to every need of his creatures	You are our protector
9. The Eminent	Al-'Aziz	One who is: so significant that few exist like him, for whom there is intense need as well as one to whom access is difficult	Lord God, living and true
10. The Compeller	Al-Jabbar	He compels each thing, and nothing compels Him	
11. The Proud	Al-Mutakabbir	The one who regards everything as unworthy in relation to Himself	
12. The Creator	Al-Khaliq	He is the planner of all	

⁷ Tu es sanctus Dominus Deus solus, qui facis mirabilia. Opuscula Sancti Patris Francisci Assisiensis, Caietanus Esser, ed. Bibliotheca Franciscana Ascetica Medii Aevi Tom. XII (Grottaferrata: Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1978), p. 90.

13. The Producer	Al-Bari'	He initiates existence	You, holy Father, are King of heaven and earth
14. The Fashioner	Al-Musawwir	He arranges the forms of things invented in the finest way	
15. He Who is Full of Forgiveness	Al-Ghaffar	He conceals sins and refuses to punish because of them	Merciful Saviour
16. The Dominator	Al-Qahhar	The one who subdues all	
17. The Bestower	Al-Wahhab	The one who gives everyone what they need, expecting no recompense	You are all our riches, And you suffice for us
18. The Provider	Al-Razzaq	The one who sustains all, outwardly and inwardly	You are all our riches, And you suffice for us
19. The Opener	Al-Fattah	The one who opens the closed and discloses the unclear (lifts the veil)	
20. The Omniscient	Al-Alim	The one who embodies perfect knowledge and from whom knowledge is derived	
21. He Who Contracts	Al-Qabid	The one who appropriates souls from dead bodies at death	
22. He Who Expands	Al-Basit	Extends souls to bodies at quickening	
23. The Abaser	Al-Khafid	The one who banishes the evil ones	
24. The Exalter	Al-Rafi	The one who raises up the faithful	
25. The Honourer	Al-Mu'izz	The one who gives dominion to whom he wills	
26. He who humbles	Al-Mudhill	The one who removes dominion from whom he wills	
27. The All-Hearing	Al-Sami	he hears secrets and whispers and even what is more hidden than these	
28. The All-Seeing	Al-Basir	The one who witnesses and sees such that nothing is remote to him	
29. The Arbitrator	Al-Hakam	The arbitrating and avenging judge whose ruling no one overturns	
30. The Just	Al-Adl	One who is the opposite of injustice and oppression	You are justice and moderation
31. The Benevolent	Al-Latif	One who combines gentleness in action and a delicacy of perception	
32. The Totally Aware	Al-Khabir	One from whom no secret is hidden	
33. The Mild	Al-Halim	One who is not roused to anger or wrath	You are justice and moderation

34. The Tremendous	Al-Azim	One who comprehends the inconceivable	Great and wonderful Lord
35. The All-Forgiving	Al-Ghafur	He is the perfection and completeness of forgiveness and forgiving	Merciful Saviour
36. The Grateful	Al-Shakur	The One who rewards and gives eternal happiness in the next life	You are our haven and our hope
37. The Most High	Al-Ali	The One above whose rank there is no rank, and all are inferior to him	You are the Most High, You are almighty
38. The Great	Al-Kabir	The One who possesses the perfection of existence	You are great Great and wonderful Lord
39. The All-Preserver	Al-Hafiz	He perpetuates the existence of all existing things and sustains them	You are our haven and our hope
40. The Nourisher	Al-Muqit	The One who provides nutrients for all, as in food to bodies and knowledge to hearts	You are all our riches, And you suffice for us
41. The Reckoner	Al-Hasib	The One who suffices, for he is all one needs (and it is inconceivable that this be said of anything else)	You are all our riches, And you suffice for us
42. The Majestic	Al-Jalil	One qualified by: might, dominion, sanctification, knowledge, wealth, power, beauty, etc.	You are beauty
43. The Generous	Al-Karim	The One who unites in himself forgiveness, fidelity, prodigal giving	You are all our riches, And you suffice for us
44. The All-Observant	Al-Raqib	One who knows and protects with a constant gaze	You are our protector
45. The Answerer of Prayers	Al-Mujib	The One who responds before being asked	
46. The Vast	Al-Wasi	The One who is expansiveness, without limit	
47. The Wise	Al-Kakim	The One who possesses wisdom; the most sublime thing of all is God	You are wisdom
48. The Lovingkind	Al-Wadud	One who wishes all well and favors them (close to "merciful")	You are love
49. The All-Glorious	Al-Majid	One who is noble in essence, beautiful in actions, and bountiful in gifts and favors... like "glory." It is as if the All-Glorious combines the Majestic, the Bestower, and the Generous	You are beauty You are all our riches
50. The Raiser of the Dead	Al-Ba'ith	The One who gives creatures life on the day of resurrection	You are our eternal life

51. The Universal Witness	Al-Shahid	One with knowledge of visible and invisible things	
52. The Truth	Al-Haqq	One who is the antithesis of falsehood; truly existing in himself, from which every true thing gets its true reality	
53. The Guardian (Trustee)	Al-Wakil	The One to whom everything is entrusted, fully capable of carrying it out and faithful in perfect execution	You are our guardian and defender
54. The Strong	Al-Qawi	One with perfect power	You are strong
55. The Firm	Al-Matin	An intensification of strength	
56. The Patron	Al-Wali	One who is love and protector	You are our protector
57. The Praised	Al-Hamid	One who is praised and extolled—praise of himself from eternity and his servants' praise of him forever	
58. The Knower of Each Separate Thing	Al-Muhsi	The One in whose knowledge the limits of each object as well as its quantity and dimensions are revealed	
59. The Beginner, the Cause	Al-Mubdi	The One who bestows existence, (initiated creation)	
60. The Restorer	Al-Mu'id	The One who will gather all together on the last day; for all began in him and in him is restored.	
61. The Life-Giver	Al-Muhyi	None is the creator of death and life but God, so he is the Life-Giver.	
62. The Slayer	Al-Mumit	None is the creator of death and life but God, so he is the Slayer.	
63. The Living	Al-Hayy	All existing things are under God's activity; he is the absolutely living One.	
64. The Self-Existing	Al-Qayyum	The One who subsists in himself and in whom each thing subsists (human access to this attribute is in proportion to his detachment from everything that is not God the most high.)	
65. The Resourceful	Al-Wajid	The One who lacks nothing	
66. The Magnificent	Al-Majid	Means the same as the All-Glorious	
67. The Unique	Al-Wahid	The One who can be neither divided nor duplicated	

68. The Eternal	Al-Samad	The One to whom one turns in need, who is intended in our desires; ultimate dominion culminates in him.	
69. The All-Powerful	Al-Qadir	The One who possesses power	
70. The All-Determiner	Al-Muqtadir	Same as above, but more emphatic	
71. The Promoter	Al-Muqaddim	The One who brings close and promotes (e.g., prophets)	
72. The Postponer	Al-Mu'akhkhir	The One who brings close and banishes (e.g., enemies)	
73. The First	Al-Anwal	The first beginning is from him.	
74. The Last	Al-Akhir	The last return and destination is to him.	
75. The Manifest	Al-Zahir	He is concealed by his light and hidden by the intensity of his manifestations: he is the manifest One than whom there is none more manifest	
76. The Hidden	Al-Batin	He is the hidden One than whom none is more hidden	
77. The Ruler	Al-Wali	The One who plans the affairs of creation and governs them	
78. The Exalted	Al-Muta'ali	Means the same as the Most High, although it is intensified	God almighty
79. The Doer of Good	Al-Barr	The One from whom every good deed and beneficence comes	You are holy, Lord, the only God, and your deeds are wonderful
80. The Ever-relenting	Al-Tawwab	The One who calls sinners to return to him and repent, granting them favor, gain	Merciful Saviour
81. The Avenger	Al-Muntaqim	The One who breaks the back of the recalcitrant, punishes criminals, and intensifies the punishment of the oppressor, after giving them the opportunity to change	
82. The Effacer of Sins	Al-Afu	The One who erases sins and overlooks acts of disobedience (close to the All-Forgiving)	Merciful Saviour
83. The All-Pitying	Al-Ra'uf	The One who possesses pity, an intensification of mercy	Merciful Saviour

84. The King of Absolute Sovereignty	Malike al-Mulk	The One who carries out what he will in his kingdom, bringing into being and destroying, perpetuating, and annihilating	You are the Most High, You are almighty God almighty
85. The Lord of Majesty and Generosity	Dhu' l-Jalal wa 'l-Ikram	The One from whom there is no majesty, perfection or generosity, but that it is his	You are great. You are the Most High
86. The Equitable	Al-Muqsit	The One who demands justice for the wronged from the wrongdoer	You are justice and moderation
87. The Uniter	Al-Jami	The One who combines similar and dissimilar things, and opposites. (e.g., bringing many human beings together on the face of the earth)	
88. The Rich	Al-Ghani	The One who transcends connections with things other than himself	
89. The Enricher	Al-Mughni	The One who supplies what is needed	You are all our riches, And you suffice for us
90. The Protector	Al-Mani	The One who counters the causes of destruction and diminishment in religious and temporal affairs	You are our protector
91. The Punisher	Al-Darr	The One from whom good comes forth, benefit and harm	
92. He who Benefits	Al-Nafi	The One from whom good comes forth, benefit and harm	
93. Light	Al-Nur	The visible One by whom everything is made visible (existence is a light streaming to all things from the light of his essence)	
94. The Guide	Al-Hadi	The One who guides the elect to a knowledge of his essence so they might call on it as a witness to things	
95. The Absolute Cause	Al-Badi	Is such that nothing similar to it is known; so He is originator eternally and forever	You, holy Father, are King of heaven and earth
96. The Everlasting	Al-Baqi	Is the existent whose existence is necessary in itself	You are Three and One, Lord God, all good
97. The Inheritor	Al-Warith	The One to whom possessions return after the possessors disappear, since he is the One who endures and to whom all returns	

98. The Right in Guidance	Al-Rashid	The One whose plans are ordered to their goals without the help of any advisor	
99. The Patient	Al-Sabur	The One who does not let haste move him to action before the right time, but rather decides matters according to plans, without being subject to a force opposing his will	You are justice and moderation

Sources: *Al-Ghazali: The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*, al-Maqṣad al-sana fi sharh asma’Allah al-husna, David B. Burrell and Nazih Daher, trans. (Cambridge, U.K.: The Islamic Texts Society, 1992).

Excerpted from Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies* (Cincinnati: Franciscan Media, 2008).

Taken from: *Daring to Cross the Threshold: Francis of Assisi Encounters Sultan Malek al-Kamil*, Kathleen A. Warren (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2012).

THE USE OF POWER

One of the main themes in any story involving the Crusades, or any violent conflict, has to do with the use and understanding of power. Throughout his life, Francis addresses the use of power in rather unusual ways. Francis’s directives to his brothers—the men who joined Francis in his life of mendicancy, penance, and peacemaking—who are called to live among the Muslims is a poignant illustration of how Francis understands power.

After Francis left the Levant and returned to Umbria, he added to the Rule (Form of Life) that gave direction to the life of the lesser brothers of Assisi. We know that addition as chapter 16 of the Earlier Rule. It states, as Michael Cusato quoted, “when you go among the Muslims don’t take it into your head to start preaching in the public squares. Especially don’t go preaching against the Muslims and their religion. Simply go and live among them as good Christians would live...”

The Rule of St. Francis is the first Rule of any religious group to include mention of ministry to the Muslims. It seems obvious that Francis’s intention for the brothers who were to live among the Muslims was first of all to build up a peaceful society with the Muslims through a nonviolent approach. The brothers are *not* to start preaching against the Muslims or denigrate their religion in any way. Only when they are sure that it is God’s will that they preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ should they engage in such activity. This addition seems to imply that if there is no certainty that the Spirit of God is directing them to preach the Gospel message, it is enough for the brothers simply to live in peace with the Muslims. This was surely not a normal approach by the leaders of the Christian Church to interaction with “nonbelievers.” Do you think what Francis is calling for is “enough” of a mission? Why or why not? What kind of power is there in witnessing to one’s values through action rather than words?

(For more background on chapter 16 of the First Rule of St. Francis, see Jan Hoerbericht’s *Francis and Islam*, chapter 3.)

Several times in the DVD we hear about power and the use of power. Michael Cusato, OFM, states: "Power very often destroys the human fraternity. One of Francis's great insights was to restore and live out the integrity of human relationships, the integrity of the human fraternity, by giving up the power over in order to serve one another."

Discuss the use of power in your life. How do you experience personal power? How do you use it? Can we make the Franciscan model of dialogue, which includes giving up "power over" in order to "serve one another," work for us today?

Michael Calabria speaks about a similar spiritual power that might have been identified in Francis and the Sufis (Muslim mystics). Later, Michael shares that he served people with leprosy. Explore the relationship between "spiritual power" and the "power of service."

Imam Hendi asks, "Can we have the courage to go beyond our uniqueness into someone else's territory, to explore it, to feel at home in it, yet feel safe enough to come back to my own home?" What is the interplay of courage and foolishness?

Part 2 of the DVD also addresses the reality of power. This segment thus provides another opportunity to pursue the place of power in peacemaking.

In Part 2, Robert Lentz speaks about a certain foolishness being required to achieve a desired result for the common good. What is the connection between "power" and "foolishness"?

Where or in whom have you seen the foolishness of power in our world?

Can you identify examples of when the foolishness of power actually has been an expression of wisdom? Why isn't Francis' approach to power more frequently utilized by religious and civil leaders?

Can you imagine what factors might foster the release of foolishness in the exercise of power?

"A Common Word Between Us and You"

Any serious Muslim-Christian dialogue today surely should include reflection on the historic document issued in September 2007 by 138 Muslim leaders titled, "A Common Word Between Us and You."

For the first time in history, a statement was issued collaboratively by members of every major branch of Islam. This groundbreaking text identified the common ground shared between Muslims and Christians. It is difficult to comprehend the incredible challenge and accomplishment of the 138 Muslim leaders who wrote the Common Word statement. There is no hierarchy or organizational structure that allows any single person or group to speak on behalf of Muslim faithful; thus, the publication of this document represents a watershed moment in the history of Islam. "A Common Word Between Us and You" is a powerful entrée into interreligious dialogue and interaction.

The beginning of the document identifies what prompted the statement:

"The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians. The basis for this peace already exists: It is part of the very foundational principles of both faiths: Love of the One God and love of the neighbor."

The unity of God, the love for God, and the love of neighbor thus form the common ground between Islam and Christianity.

The Common Word website, is filled with information about the document and ways to use it. (www.acommonword.com)

Acquiring a New Worldview ***A Movement Toward Peacemaking***

It appears that both Francis and the Sultan had an ability to enter into the world of the other, spend time exploring that world, and rather than judging the other, simply accept the other and his worldview. Would that acceptance also have included respect of the other? It seems there was both courtesy and an openness to listen and converse on the parts of Francis and the Sultan.

The Croatian theologian Miraslav Volf speaks of a process of being reconciled that is rooted in the very mercy of God, a major point of common ground between Islam and Christianity. Volf identifies a three-step movement beginning with repentance/forgiveness of the other, followed by making space for the other and concluding with a healing of memories.⁸ Out of Volf's Christian tradition, the mercy and reconciliation offered to humanity come from the cross of Christ. Only sacrificial love can affect reconciliation by not letting the other remain an enemy and by creating space in oneself for the enemy to come in. The need to engage the other is basic. It is a process of looking at reality from two differing perspectives—one's own and that of "the other"—a process of double vision. Three steps are involved:

1. Stepping outside oneself (which requires being ready for a surprise)
2. Crossing a social boundary and temporarily inhabiting the world of the other
3. Taking the other into one's own world⁹

It seems quite clear that Francis of Assisi practiced this double vision. Whether it was with the leper, the wolf of Gubbio, or the Sultan, Francis was able to enter a different world. Realizing his own constant need for conversion, he confidently approached the other willing to offer his truth—his fervor for Christ and for enhancing the reign of God in the world—and receive the other's truth. Francis stepped into other worlds with no need to change them, with an openness to encounter the other as brother, and with a willingness to be changed. In his willingness to engage in such double vision, Francis realized the hope and the goal that Volf articulates for such an action: simply a common language and a common human understanding that allows both parties "undistortively to be." Double vision is not practiced without risk and willingness to have one's world turned upside down. Peacemaking demands both.

When have I experienced double vision? How did it affect my worldview? What price did I pay for the experience? What benefits did I receive? Is double vision something I would consider engaging in? What issues in my life might benefit from such a practice?

What place does humility have in the practice of double vision? What is the place of humility in our society? Our world? Where have you seen humility expressed? What does it take to practice humility? Do you see it as a strength for our society? Why or why not?

⁸ Miraslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), p. 100.

⁹ Volf, pp. 250–253.

Reflections

As was mentioned earlier in our resources, imagination is critical if a new reality is to replace a broken, fragmented world. Francis was a man with a heightened sense of imagination and a tremendous ability to dream new dreams—the kind dreamt by some of the greatest prophets of all time.¹⁰ Imagination and dreams allow one to redefine the world and bring forth conditions that reflect the vision of the peaceable kingdom described by the prophet Isaiah. Francis refused to be limited by what was accepted as “normal” and thus discovered a new way of acting toward lepers, the poor, the disenfranchised, Muslims (the dreaded enemy), and even a ferocious wolf. A change of vision brings forth new possibilities. Thus Francis dared to cross boundaries and move into uncharted territory (relationships) to repair a wounded world. Francis adopted a set of “abnormal” behaviors to replace the “normal” behaviors of society that, according to his vision, were actually the “abnormal” ones.

Indeed, Francis’s behavior spoke to a reality he imagined as reflective of God’s intention for all of creation—that is, of God’s dwelling place, God’s house. It is apparent that Francis imagined:

- A world where hearts are disarmed, where each person, fully reconciled with him/herself, is a place of welcome to all others just as they are (without exception)
- A world where people remember and accept their humanity as it was given in the beginning and act into reality a new world of equality, sufficiency, and service
- A world where mercy is lavished upon the other, where wrongs are forgiven, and a torrent of compassion heals all wounds
- A world where littleness is the only power, where life is arranged in such a way that all (especially the most vulnerable) are safe, well cared for and loved
- A world where people speak together about God’s faithfulness in the past and God’s desire and promise to God’s people in the future, where shared remembrance of God’s activity brings forth such an outrageous hope that fear is wiped away, and where people know without a doubt that God is here
- A cosmos at peace in which all know their deepest security is rooted in their relationship with the other—where each one knows her/himself and the other as brother/sister

These building blocks indeed might nurture the type of world God envisions for God’s people—a world of unity and harmony, not alienation and fear. Those who imagine and dream live differently because they know something the world doesn’t know. They embrace a vision the world doesn’t honor. They trust a promise that the world does not trust and so they imagine a world that is yet to be born.

It is a worthy dream to envision members of different faiths exploring together significant building blocks of peace as they invite each other into their own traditions and respectfully enter into the traditions of the “other.” At the least it makes a small contribution to eradicating some of the ignorance about the “other” that continues to divide the human family. It might even hold some grander hopes of cooperating and building together a new world.

We need models to show that the impossible is possible, to show that what has become accepted as normal is actually abnormal and that what is abnormal can become the norm. That is, it is possible for Muslims and Christians, and others, in encountering each other, to contribute to peace in the world. Sharing a common desire that focuses on ways to bring forth peace is such a contribution. Along with the grand vision, we need stories of small successful steps that witness to:

¹⁰ Prophets such as Abraham, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Muhammad.

- getting along with each other
- learning from each other
- sharing passion for God with each other
- staying committed to one's own tradition while learning about the tradition of others
- respecting those other traditions
- discovering that the pilgrimage of life is meant to be traveled with companions of many traditions, all brothers and sisters living in fidelity to the same God, committed to building the same reign of God—in the Mystery that is God

Indeed there is a mystery here! It is a mystery that Francis entered into confidently and which invites others to do the same. Pope John Paul II spoke of this mystery in his address to Muslim youth of Morocco:

[T]here is a mystery here on which, I am certain, God will one day enlighten us.... I believe that, today, God invites us to change our old practices. We must respect each other and also we must stimulate each other in good works on the path of God.... I wish that you may be able to help in thus building a world where God may have first place, and where we, believers, give expression in our lives and in our cities to "the most beautiful names which our religious traditions attribute to God."¹¹

Conclusion

Francis's message, after 800 years, has lost none of its relevance and import. If anything, it is stronger and more popular than it ever has been. His was a radical message that taught a new way of relating to one another: there can be no true peace in our world unless people are willing to move out and embrace the other as brother/sister. Many faith traditions find in Francis a hope and an inspiration for building a world of peace. Now is surely the time for Muslims and Christians to allow the wisdom of Francis and Sultan al-Kamil to call them together to witness to the brother/sisterhood they share, even as they respect and honor the differences among them. Now is surely the time for Muslims and Christians, whose fellow coreligionists in some areas of the world are violently destroying families, countries, and cultures, to witness to a new way of relating: as brother/sister one to the other, rooted in the example and the wisdom of the historic thirteenth-century encounter on the banks of the Nile. After 800 years, may the people of the twenty-first century hear and embrace the model and give expression to the universal message rooted in the heart of God worshiped by Muslims and Christians:

**May God give you peace.
Assalam Aleikum.**

¹¹Jan Hoerberichts, *Francis and Islam*, p.154, quoting from "The Speech of the Holy Father John Paul II to Young Muslims during his Meeting with them at Casablanca (Morocco) August 19, 1985," pp.13–22.

PART II

The Legacy

COMMON SYMBOLS

We need to learn to be more literate when it comes to nonverbal symbols. Art has a direct impact on each of us, even before we have a chance to think. It is a mistake to remain passive in its presence. We need to learn to engage visual art and other nonvisual symbolism in dialog as part of a mature spirituality.

Nonverbal symbols always have been used by totalitarian regimes and other oppressive systems as propaganda to control populations. We can think about the negative images so often presented by the media of African American males, of gay men, and of women in general. How often do we allow ourselves to be subtly controlled by what we see or hear? How has imagery been used in my faith tradition to emphasize certain messages? Where has the lack of such presentation limited or denied presentation of certain realities?

How does an image make me feel about myself? What is an image saying about others? Do I agree? Is there a hidden agenda behind an image? Does an image promote life in its fullest, or does it denigrate someone or something? Does an image celebrate life? Does an image correspond to what I personally know or feel about God?

How do the messages offered by Brother Robert Lentz's icon and the icons depicting Francis standing near the fire differ? What does each one say to you? What emotions does each call forth? Discuss the power of images, especially the subliminal power contained in images.

Brother Robert Lentz explores the universal symbol of fire in his icon. You might wish to do further research on the meaning and symbolism of fire in Islam and Christianity and other world religions.

Sacred beads are another common symbol found in Christianity and Islam, as well as in other world religions. These sacred beads include but are not limited to:

- Catholic rosary beads (reflections on events in the life of Jesus and Mary, his mother)
- Muslim tasbeeh beads (recitation of the 99 Beautiful Names of God)
- Hindu mala beads (repetition of a mantra or divine names)
- Buddhist mala beads (chanting and contemplation toward achieving nirvana)
- Native American beads (recitation that provides a way of experiencing the "heartbeat of creation")

You might wish to further investigate this symbol, which speaks clearly of some of the most significant common ground among the world religions. Indeed, sacred beads are one of the primary spiritual tools and methods known to humankind. One excellent resource for doing this research is a book by Gray Henry and Susannah Marriott, *Beads of Faith*.

What other common symbols are shared by world religions? What value is there in finding common ground among world religions?

Brother Robert speaks about halos, flames, gold leaf, and aesthetics, such as floral carpets showing the flowers of paradise, the light that comes into the dome of the mosque, and the great emptiness with no images. He talks of art that needs transcendence as art that can lead to mystical union with God. What place does art have in your spirituality? What kind of art speaks to you of God? Inspires you to be a better human

person? Moves you to action as a faithful son/daughter of God? Might exploring the art of another religious tradition be beneficial to your understanding of that tradition?

Brother Robert speaks about the two side panels that are part of his triptych. Each presents an image of a peacemaker:

- One portrays the legend of the wolf of Gubbio. (The primary source material for this story is found in “The Little Flowers of St. Francis” – volume 3 of Francis of Assisi, Early Documents.)
- The other depicts the Sultan’s spiritual guide and ambassador to the West, Fakhruddin al-Farisi. This is the man who was finally able to broker the Sultan’s peace treaty with the crusaders.

You might want to do more research about these two stories.

You also might want to consider what panels *you* would paint to elaborate on the central theme of the triptych. What stories of history would you put in the side panels? What contemporary stories would you illustrate? Perhaps each person would like to paint a triptych and bring it to the next session. Be creative: use calligraphy, stylized words, and symbols to create your icon of peacemaking.

What are the requirements (values, actions, attitudes, etc.) to be included in such a portrayal?

PUBLIC MEDIA

In recent times we have experienced the explosive power of images in world events. From the 2005 Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoon controversy in Denmark to the 2012 film *Innocence of Muslims* by an amateur L.A. filmmaker, we see the extremely volatile power of images. Islamophobia is only heightened by such coverage.

Discuss the importance of such images in our media. What kind of response does the moral conscience offer to these stories that travel throughout the world nearly instantaneously? What concrete actions on your part might be appropriate in the face of such propaganda?

In fall of 2012 an anti-Muslim campaign of subway advertisements in New York City, Washington, D.C., and other cities was launched. The ads strongly suggest that Arab or Muslim opponents of Israel’s policies are “savages.” Information about this campaign is provided below. How would you respond if this were happening in your city? Discuss the implications of various responses.

Responses by various groups to such hateful campaigns are in the forefront of raising awareness and taking action to address the blatant attacks. “Shoulder to Shoulder” is one such organization. Its website explains:

Shoulder-to-Shoulder is an interfaith organization dedicated to ending anti-Muslim sentiment by strengthening the voice of freedom and peace. Founded in November 2010 by over 20 national religious groups, Shoulder-to-Shoulder works not only on a national level, but offers strategies and support to local and regional efforts to address anti-Muslim sentiment and seeks to spread the word abroad.

This is just one of many worthwhile websites to be aware of and use:

<http://shouldertoshouldercampaign.org/>

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provides some excellent material for discussion of interreligious issues. Its downloadable leaflet “Talking Points” sets forth “propositions and opportunities for discussion and

engagement around issues in Christian-Muslim Relations. These Talking Points are intended to stimulate reflection, response, and activity on key issues as part of ongoing inter-religious engagement today.

“Each leaflet addresses a particular topic and concludes with several questions for further discussion. These Talking Points have been formulated in such a way as to draw out inquiries and reflections that might otherwise go unattended in our relations with Christians and Muslims. These Talking Points address real questions raised by Christians in varying communities...”

Access to the Christian-Muslim Talking Points User Guide:

<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Presiding-Bishop/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Inter-Religious-Relations/Christian-Muslim-Relations/Christian-Muslim-Talking-Points.aspx>

FOUR TYPES OF DIALOGUE

Interreligious Dialogue and the Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council, through various documents such as the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*), the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*), and the Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*), identified relationships with other world religions as one of the Catholic Church’s key agenda items. The 1991 Vatican document Dialogue and Proclamation is a continuation of the Council’s work. It defines the term dialogue as:

“all positive and constructive interreligious *relations* with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at *mutual understanding* and *enrichment* in obedience to truth and respect for freedom.”

The document goes on to identify four specific types of dialogue:

- 1) The Dialogue of LIFE.** This happens quite naturally. As neighborhoods become mixed, people begin to interact in neighborly ways:
 - a. Backyard picnics, neighborhood ballgames or block parties, birthday parties, celebrations of births, graduations, weddings
 - b. Exchanging daycare
 - c. Sharing sympathy and support at times of tragedies
 - d. Taking classes together on topics of common interest
 - e. Sharing in a book discussion club
 - f. The dialogue of life is being neighbor to the other, getting to know him/her/them, in the most basic activities of life

- 2) The Dialogue of RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.** Once the former is in place, or perhaps before it is, possibilities for sharing religious rituals occur:
 - a. Baptisms, First Communion, funerals, a Christmas or Easter Mass
 - b. Friday prayer at the mosque, a Ramadan *iftar* meal, sharing in the fast, listening to the story of the pilgrimage to Mecca, attending a whirling dervish event
 - c. Rituals of other religions

As we share our own tradition, how much more deeply it comes alive to us. As we listen to the experience of the other, what richness is added to our own traditions!

3) The Dialogue of ACTION. This involves all the causes building up the local community, all efforts toward peace and justice that can be shared:

- a. Habitat for Humanity
- b. Community fundraisers
- c. Social concern efforts such as environmental issues, immigration concerns, healthcare, language skills (ESL), childcare, neighbors in need, etc.

4) The Dialogue of THEOLOGICAL EXCHANGE. This type of dialogue involves only a very small percentage of the respective populations. This is where our theologians, scholars, and clerics meet to talk about doctrinal issues. This is what happens at the Vatican and in university settings. These are important exchanges, reserved for a small minority of the more than one billion followers each of Islam and Christianity. Theological exchanges occur between leaders of all world religions in a variety of settings. Important, yes, but very restricted. This doesn't mean we at the grassroots don't talk about our beliefs and practices. It is important that we do so, but we do it in a different way than our scholars and leaders do.

Elizabeth Johnson, a noted Catholic theologian, highlights the value of interreligious dialogue:

The dialogues of life, action, theological exchange, and religious experience allow Christians to glimpse the God we know through the windows framed by other peoples' faith traditions and to share our own precious heritage in exchange. The public effects are far-reaching. Mutual understanding coupled with growing friendships set up possibilities for a new relationship among the religions themselves. The personal effects are equally significant. Glimpsing the Holy through the religious experience of peoples of other faiths, Christians grow in knowledge and love of the great mystery of the living God. Reflecting on his own experience of dialogue in India over almost four decades, Jacques Dupuis noted, "Personal commitment to one's own faith and openness to the faith of others need not be mutually exclusive; rather they ought to grow in direct proportion." If one has an ear attuned to the Spirit's presence, then one hears the music, even if it is being played in a different key. And one's repertoire consequently expands.¹²

It appears that "interreligious relations" is a more accurate term than "interreligious dialogue" for what we are speaking about and what we want to encourage. We are in need of building relationships, of connecting with one another in order to promote better understanding and beneficial cooperation among people of all faiths.

Understanding dialogue in this expansive way brings a great richness. As Francis and Sultan Malek al-Kamil have witnessed to us, what is needed is interaction, face-to-face encounters, an authentic getting to know the other. Conversation is important, but not without the action of encounter and cooperation.

If you have thought about interreligious dialogue in the past, what was your understanding of it? Its purpose? Its goal? Its methods?

How has your understanding been affected by the information we have discussed in our sessions? What do you think about the definition of *dialogue* put forth by the document "Dialogue and Proclamation"? What is the value of engaging in it? Having been involved in this discussion, how would you rate the importance of such an activity in your life? How would you rate the importance of such an activity in the priorities of your parish/congregation/religious group? What action might be taken to further promote interreligious relations in your community?

¹² Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Quest for the Living God*, pp. 173–174.

Comment on the quote by Elizabeth Johnson. Do you think we can glimpse God in a new way through the lens of religious traditions other than our own? Do you think this might have been the experience of Francis and/or the Sultan? Have you experienced growth in your own spiritual life because of an experience of another religious tradition? Share more about it.

Would you agree with Jacques Dupuis's comment: "Personal commitment to one's own faith and openness to the faith of others need not be mutually exclusive; rather they ought to grow in direct proportion"? Comment.

At the end of the segment, Imam Hendi states: "Interreligious dialogue may start with the church or the mosque. It may start with studying a verse in the Qur'an and a verse in the Bible. But it has to end in the field where Christians and Muslims come together, rolling up their sleeves, to take care of a shelter, a homeless shelter. . . a project that will give food to the hungry." Archbishop Fitzgerald seems to agree when he states: ". . . the good neighborly relations, that is dialogue as well." He goes on to say: "You don't need to be a scholar to do that. But we do need the scholars to understand, too, the different traditions and where there is possibility of conflict, but where there is also possibility of cooperation."

Which of the types of dialogue are being described by these two scholars? What ideas for action does this discussion prompt you to consider? Have you heard your clergy/leaders speak in such ways? What might it take to make dialogue a higher priority for your congregation/group?

May God give you peace!

Assalam Aleikum!

QUIZ ANSWERS (pg. 5 & 6)

Regarding My Knowledge of Islam and Muslims

A. Select the appropriate number.

1. 3) 7th century CE
2. 1) the Arabic word for God
3. 2) Saudi Arabia
4. 2) Islam's sacred book
5. 3) 7-8 million Muslims
6. 4) all of the above
7. 4) submission
8. 3) Indonesia
9. 1) a prophet
10. 3) 5 times a day
11. 1) Mecca
12. 3) one who practices a specific form of Muslim mysticism
13. 3) a billion
14. 2) mosques
15. 2) Cedar Rapids, Iowa

B. Check all those you consider to be true.

- 2) Jesus, Moses, and Abraham are all important figures for Muslims.
- 6) Islam is as misunderstood today by Christians as it was in the 13th century.
- 7) The Islamic concept of "jihad" is primarily spiritual.
- 8) Islam does not condone terrorism any more than does Christianity.
- 11) The Qur'an is roughly the size of the New Testament.

QUIZ ANSWERS (pg. 7 & 8)

Regarding My Knowledge of Christianity and Christians

A. Select the appropriate number.

1. 2) 1st century CE
2. 3) the God Muslims, Christians, and Jews worship
3. 3) Israel
4. 2) Christianity's sacred book
5. 1) 247 million
6. 2) the anointed one
7. 2) Brazil
8. 4) all of the above
9. 2) Holy Week
10. 2) four
11. 2) a Christian cleric
12. 2) 1.2 billion
13. 2) churches

B. Check all those you consider to be "true."

- 1) Christ is believed to be both fully human and fully divine.
- 2) Jesus, Moses, and Abraham are all important figures for Christians.
- 6) Diversity within Christianity is misunderstood today by the majority of Muslims.
- 7) Christianity does not condone terrorism any more than does Islam.
- 9) The New Testament is roughly the size of the Qur'an.

In the Footprints of Francis & the Sultan – DVD Credits

Narrated by

Kathleen A. Warren, OSF

Major support provided by

USCCB Catholic Communication Campaign
The Institute of Interfaith Dialogue
Franciscan Friars, Holy Name Province

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Helix Design & Production

Motion Graphics / Animation

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Bronwen Jones

Songs

“Sia Laudato San Francesco”

Anonymous, 13th-century; arranged by Jann Cosart
Performed by Altramar medieval music ensemble
From the CD *Saint Francis and the Minstrels of God*
Licensed by Altramar medieval music ensemble

“Breath” & “Halitus”

Written, arranged & performed by Mercan Dede
From the CD *Nefes*
Doublemoon Records, Istanbul (2006)
Licensed by Mercan Dede

Still Photography

Greg Friedman, OFM (Egypt, Turkey)
Christopher John, SSF (La Verna)
Laura (La Verna Cave interior)

John Feister (1266 Ms – Legenda Major)
Francesco Fratta (Sacro Sancto, Assisi)
Maria Rossi Cifariello (St. Joseph, Cairo)
Barry Raymakers (Maria Van Jessekerk, Delft)

In the Footprints of Francis & the Sultan – DVD Credits

Archival Images

Museo Francese di Roma, Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini
(1266 Ms - Legenda Major)
Mitch Williamson (1st Crusade- French Ms)
Dr. Youssef Ziedan (Ali Ibn al-Athir Ms)
Art Passions (Gustave Doré)
Web Gallery of Art (all 13th-14th Century art)
Bibliothèque nationale de France (de Vitry cover)

Finishing

Color Grading – Terence Curren
Sound Mix – Curtis Fritsch
(Alpha Dogs, Burbank)

Additional funding provided by

Jane and Mary Campion
Paul Forster
Phyllis Phelan
Daniel and Patricia Rukavina
James Russell
Kathleen Uhler, OSF
Eunice Warren
Linda Wieser, OSF
Felician Sisters of North America
Franciscan Friars of the Atonement
Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, N.Y.
Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, Ill.
Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
Franciscan Sisters of the Poor
Franciscan Sisters of Tiffin, Ohio
Sisters of St. Francis, Dubuque, Iowa
Sisters of St. Francis of Little Falls, Minn.
Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, Holy Name Province
Sisters of St. Francis of St. Joseph
Knights of Columbus, Rochester Foundation
St. Marys Hospital Sponsorship Board, Rochester, Minn.

Special thanks to

Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Prof. James M. Powell
Prof. Amir Hussain
Jan Hoerberichts
Gwenole Jeusset, OFM
The Franciscan Centre of Christian Oriental Studies, Cairo
Jeanne Rizkallah
Consulate of Egypt, San Francisco