



Capuchin Franciscans

Monastery

Church of the Sacred Heart

Parish Offices: 40 Convent Avenue • Yonkers, New York 10703
Tel: (914) 963-4205 • Fax: (914) 476-4960

February 16, 2013

We recently attended an interreligious faith service here at our parish in Sacred Heart in Yonkers, NY. It was promoted and ably planned by Fordham Doctoral Candidate Chuck Chesnavage. All in all the prayer service reminded us that the many religions of the world have more in common and that we need to celebrate our common beliefs.

As parishioners, we acted as ushers for the prayer service and had the opportunity to meet many of the presenters. The prayer service began with Chuck reminding us of a past inter-faith encounter: the meeting between St. Francis of Assisi and Sultan Malik al-Kamil during the Fifth Crusade. Sacred Heart is a parish staffed by Capuchin Franciscans of the province of St. Mary so it was good to hear how St. Francis was ahead of his time in his efforts to bring peace. It served to illustrate the power people rather than governments have over world events. It was a reminder that peace is worth seeking in any age.

Nine different religions offered prayers for peace. While all different, the prayers spoke to our common desires and longings for peace. We felt closer to God and a sense of kinship with the different faiths. The program had English subtitles and each presenter did an excellent job of explaining what was being said or sung. Even though we entered the Church as strangers, we left as friends.

This interreligious prayer service as part of World Interfaith Harmony Week has inspired us here at Sacred Heart to continue to provide a series of talks or panel discussions to help parishioners learn and respect other religions. It is hard to stereotype or discriminate against people of other faiths once you have met and gotten to know them. The prayer service organized and led by Chuck Chesnavage is the first step in helping us to see our "enemies" are really our friends. We are very grateful to have had this spiritual experience.

Ray McEnthy

Kathleen A McCreehy



YEAR OF FAITH 2012
2013