

History was made on Sunday at the centuries old church in Clifton Hampden on Sunday 9th February. Despite the storm, St Michael's church was almost full for the World Interfaith Harmony Week celebration' on the theme 'Caring for God's World.

Libby and George Robey and Faith and Austin Croft, from the local school, highlighted the message of 'Caring for God's World' by reading "The Golden Rule: To do unto others what you would have them do to you," which is found in all religions in different words but with same message.

All the speakers emphasised the need to work together to protect the environment, reduce violence and care for the hungry and homeless and gave example of such efforts.

An interfaith celebration for
World Interfaith Harmony Week

*Welcome: Revd Dr Marcus Braybrooke
Joint President of the World Congress of Faiths*

Hymn Please stand and join in

**For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies,
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our grateful hymn of praise.**

**For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower,
Sun and moon and stars of light,
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our grateful hymn of praise.**

**For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above,
Pleasures pure and undefiled,
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our grateful hymn of praise.**

**For each perfect gift of thine,
To our race so freely given,
Graces human and divine,**

**Flowers of earth and buds of heaven,
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our grateful hymn of praise.**

Hinduism:

*Judaism: Penny Faust
Co-President of the Oxford Jewish Congregation
and Chair of the Oxford Council of Faiths*

Please stand and join in

**Shalom, chaverim,
Shalom, chaverim,
Shalom, shalom;
L'hitra'ot,
L'hitra'ot,
Shalom, shalom.**

**Shalom, o my friends,
Shalom, o my friends,
Shalom, shalom;
Till we meet again,
Till we meet again,
Shalom, shalom.**

*Buddhism: Revd Kemmyo Taira Sato,
The Three Wheels Shin Buddhist Temple in Ealing
Please sit
The Salvation of Those Beset by Doubt
The Tannishō Chapter 9*

‘Although I recite the *nembutsu*, I seldom feel like dancing for joy, nor do I desire to hasten to the Pure Land. Why is this so?’ I asked.

My Master answered:

‘I, Shinran, had the same doubts. O Yuien-bō, you have the same doubts just as I did! But when you reflect on the matter more deeply, you will find that your

birth in the Pure Land is all the more assured just because you cannot rejoice at what should make you feel like dancing for joy on earth and in the air. It is the effect of blind passions lying heavy on one's heart and preventing one from rejoicing. Knowing this fact beforehand, the Buddha called us "ignorant beings filled with blind passions." Thus I realise that the Compassionate Vow of Other Power is for the benefit of such ignorant beings as ourselves and I find it all the more to be trusted.

'Furthermore, not being desirous of hastening to the Pure Land, we feel very much dejected when we become ill, however mild the illness, at the thought of our possible death. This is likewise caused by the effect of blind passions. We feel reluctant to abandon this old home of pain and suffering, where we have been transmigrating from time immemorial right down to the present day, and we feel no longing for the Land of Peace and Happiness, where we have yet to be born. This is again due to our blind passions, so fierce and powerful. But when our karma in this *sahā* world expires and we have no choice but to leave it behind, then, however reluctant we may feel, we will nevertheless proceed to the Pure Land. Amida especially pities those who are not desirous of hastening to the Pure Land. When you consider all this, you may realise all the more clearly how trustworthy is the Great Compassionate Vow and how firmly your birth in the Pure Land is assured.

'If, on the contrary, you felt like dancing for joy and wished to hasten to the Pure Land, you might wonder if you have any blind passions at all.'

Thus spoke my Master.

The Golden Rule read by members of Clifton Hampden Primary School

Hinduism: This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.

Judaism: What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it.

Buddhism: Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.

Christianity: In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

Christianity: Canon Sue Booy, Rector of Dorchester Abbey

The Sanctus

Sung by members of the Dorchester Abbey Choir

Holy, holy, holy, God almighty Lord!,
Holy, holy, holy, everywhere adored!

He without beginning, he the eternal one
reigns and rules forever, all things 'neath the sun
Holy, holy, holy, God almighty Lord!,
Holy, holy, holy, everywhere adored!
Power and love and wonder circling round his throne,
Praise him holy, holy,
Lord of life alone.

Please stand

**Peace is flowing like a river,
Flowing out through you and me;
Flowing out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.**

**Joy is flowing like a river,
Flowing out through you and me;
Flowing out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.**

**Faith is flowing like a river,
Flowing out through you and me;
Flowing out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.**

**Hope is flowing like a river,
Flowing out through you and me;
Flowing out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.**

**Love is flowing like a river,
Flowing out through you and me;
Flowing out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.**

Please sit

Islam: Imam Monowar Hussein, Imam at Eton College

Reading from Rumi

Mary Braybrooke, Vice President of the World Congress of Faiths

“Every war and every conflict between human beings has happened because of some disagreement about names of God. It is such an unnecessary foolishness, because just beyond the arguing there is a long table of companionship set and waiting for us to sit down. What is praised is one, so the praise is one too, many jugs being poured into a huge basin ... We have borrowed these clothes, these time-and-space personalities, from a light, and when we praise, we are pouring them back in.”

*Sikhism: Shammy Puri, Consulting Hydrogeologist,
Chair Global Commission on Transboundary Water Resources*

The hymn of Guru Govind Singh ji – the Tenth Guru – asserting that the whole of mankind has the same origin and returns after death to the same source:

As out of a single fire
Millions of sparks arise,
Arise in separation
But come together again
When they fall back into the fire

As from the heap of dust
Grains of dust are swept up
Fill the air, and filling it
Fall in a heap of dust

As out of a single stream
Countless waves rise up
And, being water, fall
Back in water again

So from God’s form emerge
Alive all animate things
And since they rise from Him
They shall fall in Him again

*Meditation: The Pearl of Peace
Sister Georgina: Inter Faith Coordinator London
Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University*

Baha’i: Dr Philip Koomen, Member of the Oxfordshire Baha’i Community

The Golden Rule read by members of Clifton Hampden Primary School

Islam: Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.

Sikhism: I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all.

Bahá'í Faith: Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself.

Please stand and join in
Hymn

**When I needed a neighbour,
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a neighbour, were you there?
*And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter,
Were you there?***

**I was hungry and thirsty,
Were you there, were you there?
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?
*Chorus***

**I was cold, I was naked,
Were you there, were you there?
I was cold, I was naked, were you there?
*Chorus***

**When I needed a shelter
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a shelter were you there?
*Chorus***

**When I needed a healer,
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a healer, were you there?
*Chorus***

**Wherever you travel,
I'll be there, I'll be there.
Wherever you travel, I'll be there.**

Chorus

Everyone is invited to say together

***Lead us from death to life,
From falsehood to truth
Lead us from despair to hope
From fear to trust
Lead us from hate to love
From war to peace
May peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe.***

Blessing; Red Dr Marcus Braybrooke

Deep peace of the running wave to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep pace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the love of God to you

Imam Monwar Hussein quoted a Hadith Qudsi in which the Divinity speaks in the first person and states: 'I was a hidden treasure, I loved to be known and so I created creation.' The very impulse and spark for the creation of all living things is Divine love. The universe and all that it contains is a sign, to be read, not just with our physical eyes but as the Qur'an teaches, with the eyes of our hearts. All creation has a right upon us, as we the human family are the pre-eminent representatives of the Merciful God. If we are to truly discharge our role as stewards of the earth we must begin to treat the rest of creation as a trust to be treasured.

Penny Faust said that Jews were about to celebrate the New Year for Trees (Tu'bishvat) which focused on humanity's responsibility to care for God's world. Jews believe that Creation is Good and reflects the glory of its Creator. The rich variety of Nature is to be cherished and human beings are responsible for caring for all life.