



WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK



The Official UN Observance in the 1<sup>st</sup> Week of February

## **10<sup>o</sup> Scriptural Reasoning Online “Peace Making” | 25.02.2021, 19:30hrs**

In the context of the Youth Creative CommUnity campaign, which is part of the European project CommUnity, ARCO FORUM will organize a series of 24 interfaith Scriptural Reasoning activities (including the sacred writings from up to three Abrahamic religions) where young people talk about different topics based on texts parts of their sacred writings.

### **About the CommUnity project**

The CommUnity project, co-funded by the European Commission, involves 11 public and private institutions from 7 EU countries. The CommUnity project aims to address drivers of radicalisation, such as marginalisation, inequality, discrimination and denial of rights. It seeks to create new opportunities to promote peace and shared values through artistic and cultural expression. By giving a voice to young people who feel marginalised or unfairly treated, we can build powerful communities with a greater sense of belonging, well-being and self-esteem.

### **About the Youth Creative CommUnity Campaign**

The Youth Creative CommUnity is a Campaign within the CommUnity project which seeks to engage young people through artistic and creative lenses. To this end, through different Youth Creative Clubs, small artistic groups will be established, and artistic and cultural activities will be developed. The Youth Creative Clubs will be guided by artists and youth workers. Young people, who seek to empower their identity, will be encouraged to find various creative ways to express themselves. Through cultural and artistic expressions, such as music, painting, visual arts workshops, young people can develop a stronger sense of belonging. In addition, young people will be challenged to create something related to the theme "Peacefully Together", which they will present at the "Youth Creative Festival" on the first weekend of June in Brussels, Belgium. In the case of ARCO FORUM in total 24 Scriptural Reasoning sessions will be conducted and then presented at the Youth Creative Festival.

### **About Scriptural Reasoning (SR)**

In Scriptural Reasoning (SR), participants meet to read passages from their respective sacred texts. They discuss the content and the ways in which those texts shape their understanding of contemporary issues. The goal is not agreement but rather growth in understanding one another's traditions. The practice started off between Jews, Christians, and Muslims, but many other combinations of faiths have been tried.



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Reading, listening to and reflecting on scripture is something many do naturally within their own worshipping communities. Participants in SR are not asked to leave that behind; rather, people of different faiths come together to read and reflect on their scriptures side-by-side.

### **The outcome of these activities can be summarized on three main points:**

1. Learning and understanding- Participants learn more about other faith communities.
2. Exploring differences- Not only to appreciate the many things which we share and have in common, but it is also to appreciate differences among us.
3. Friendships- As traditional stereotypes of the 'other' are broken down, barriers are dismantled and at best, participants develop lasting friendships.

### **About the 10th Scriptural Reasoning Session**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, our 10th Scriptural Reasoning with the topic "Peace Making" took place online on the platform, StreamYard. This event was held as a part of the framework of the celebration of the World Interfaith Harmony Week declared as such by the United Nations since 2010.

At the beginning of the event the participants were welcomed with a short explanation about the CommUnity project and campaign, the concept of Scriptural Reasoning and the The World Interfaith Harmony week. After that the participants had the opportunity to introduce themselves so they could get to know each other better and feel like they have a safe space to talk about their beliefs. Before we started the reading and discussion of the sacred writings the guidelines for a respectful and peaceful discussion were presented. Then we started the session by reading text parts of the Quran and the New Testament and asking questions regarding the topic "Peace Making".

The main topic of this event was "Peace Making" in contemporary times. This topic was discussed based on the sacred texts the New Testament and the Quran. We had 10 people participating online through StreamYard and 25 viewers on our YouTube channel where people could watch in live or later.

The participants were able to discuss this topic through a peaceful dialogue on the bases, beliefs and stories of their religions. Therefore, the main objective of this



event is not to reach an agreement but rather growth in understanding one another's religions. By organizing this event we want to contribute in the promotion of values like respect, tolerance and dialogue through the creation of ties between different cultures and communities, facilitating their mutual recognition and offering three different visions of sound art throughout history.

### **Impressions on the text of the Quran:**

After clearing the context and some uncertain vocabulary, participants agreed on the limits of forgiveness under the Quran vision, which understand the limitations of human nature. It poses no binding obligation to forgive everything and everyone, and in the event of an unfinished apology or conflict, it is kept open for God to act on it.

Participants expressed that we as humans shall not see each other based on our differences, but rather treat each other as sisters and brothers, so that respectful and peaceful bonds can be created. One participant manifested the importance to be proud of who you are and your identity, but to avoid it transforming into superiority.

### **Impressions on the text of the New Testament:**

Firstly, some participants placed the text in context and explained the antagonism between the lessons learned and the former Talon Law or "an eye for an eye". It was discussed the low morality of that idea nowadays, but at the same time it's necessary for the preventive nature.

Some participants proposed the idea that when somebody does something good to you, for example offering help or showing kindness, one must respond with even more kindness, instead of being satisfied with giving the bare minimum back. That way, one can build strong and meaningful relationships with other people which can be a way towards constructing more peace.

Another participant shifted the situation and said the complete opposite. When somebody is acting in a disrespectful way towards another person one should react with kindness to teach that person a lesson. One participant summarized this concept with the motto "be the bigger person".

### **Impressions on the whole topic.**



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To finish up the session, the moderator suggested everyone describe the session in one word through the platform MentiMeter. The session was described with these words - “peace”, “diversity”, “mercy”, “forgiveness”, “family and “interculturalism”.

### **About obstacles due to the Covid-19 pandemic**

The COVID- 19 pandemic is still affecting Spain on a high level and gathering many people is difficult. Therefore, Arco Forum has decided to organise their events virtually using the platform Stream Yard and different social media channels such as Twitter and Youtube. To make these online sessions more interesting and dynamic, Arco Forum has chosen to use new methods to integrate their participants such as the platform MentiMeter. Through this platform the participants can share their impressions of the event with us.