

Event Report

Event Name:	<i>One Table, One World: An Interfaith Brunch for Embracing Diversity & Celebrating Harmony</i>
Event Date	February 13 th , 2025
Venue:	La Salle Parish , Pastoral Institute , Multan (Punjab, Pakistan)



Introduction & Brief Overview of the event:

On February 13, 2025, Signify Organized Interfaith Harmony observance event" themed "*One Table, One World: An Interfaith Brunch for Embracing Diversity & Celebrating Harmony*" at the Pastoral Institute in Multan. The event aimed to promote peace, interfaith harmony, diversity, and mutual respect among different religious communities. The event was attended by notable religious scholars (Muslim, Hindu & Christians), fostering a spirit of unity and understanding. The activities included an interfaith dialogue, a declaration pledge signing, an interfaith brunch, and a tree plantation activity, symbolizing growth and harmony.

Objectives of the Activity:

1. **Fostering Religious Tolerance:** The activity aimed to cultivate a deeper sense of religious tolerance among citizens, particularly vital in the diverse context of Pakistan, where various sects and religions coexist.
2. **Promoting Cultural Understanding:** The event aimed to encourage participants to appreciate and respect cultural diversity by providing an opportunity to explore and learn about different religions and their unique cultural practices.
3. **Strengthened Social Bonds:** By bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds, the activity aimed to foster stronger community relationships and mutual understanding.
4. **Increased Awareness of Shared Values:** Participants gain insights into the common principles shared across different faiths, such as compassion, justice, and peace, fostering unity.
5. **Reduced Misunderstandings:** By encouraging dialogue and collaboration, the event will help bridge gaps caused by misconceptions and stereotypes about different religious groups.
6. **Enhanced Capacity for Interfaith Dialogue:** Participants develop skills to engage in constructive interfaith conversations, promoting long-term harmony and conflict resolution.
7. **A new debate on Climate change resilience:** The Religious/faith leaders that participated in the event also discussed to use their role in society and community for encouraging the actions for climate change resilience.

Impact of interfaith Harmony Event:

The impact of Interfaith Harmony is profound, as religious leaders from different faiths come together to spread the message of peace, love, and mutual acceptance. By sitting side by side, they promote respect for one another's religions, fostering a spirit of unity and coexistence. During the Interfaith Brunch, religious scholars shared a meal at a single table, symbolizing harmony and reinforcing the importance of accepting and respecting each other's beliefs. In the Interfaith Dialogue, scholars from various faiths exchanged perspectives and insights, helping to bridge gaps, clear misconceptions, and promote a deeper understanding among different religious communities.



Interfaith Dialogue Session

The event commenced with an Interfaith Dialogue session, moderated by Mr. Ahmad Riaz, Project Manager at Signify. Mr. Ahmad began by welcoming and thanking the guests for their presence. He then introduced the concept of interfaith harmony week, its global observance, objectives and significance. The session started with a prayer led by **Rev. Fr. Iftikhar Moon**, Father In-Charge of the Pastoral Institute who also welcomed the faith leaders of diverse faiths being the host at the venue.



Father Raphael, a Catholic priest from the La Salle Parish, spoke about the importance of dialogue in every religion. He emphasized that sacred and holy books highlight obedience to God as the foremost teaching. He further stated that God created every individual uniquely, yet we all belong to one Creator. He encouraged people to follow God's teachings, stressing that just as God cares for His people, it is our duty to love and care for one another. He also underscored the responsibility of preserving the environment for future generations and avoiding the waste of Earth's resources.

Muslim scholar **Allama Syed Mujahid Abbas Gardezi** emphasized the value of peace, quoting the principle "Live and let live." He referenced the event of Karbala, highlighting the religious diversity present in that historical moment. Allama Mujahid also stressed that faith leaders are well heard and well reputed among their communities, if the persona is used to highlight importance of climate change and actions to mitigate this challenge the community would definitely consider it important and urgent.

Dr. Kishore Murad, a Hindu religious leader, spoke about the importance of following the divine rules set by God. He mentioned the common Hindu phrase "Om Shanti Om," which signifies the aspiration to reach a place of peace. Mr. Kishore also emphasized that humans are vicegerents of God and that God desires peace and love to be spread among people. Dr. Kishore also provided multiple examples from the Hindu religious scriptures that describes importance of protecting nature and environment.

Prof. Abdul Majid Watto, a religious scholar and professor at Sir Syed College, shared that Islam teaches love and respect for all individuals, regardless of their religion. He explained that since all humans are God's creation, respecting people is a way of respecting God. He further highlighted Islam's teachings on caring for orphans, neighbors, and protecting the environment irrespective of faiths but considering it a social responsibility.

Brother Waseem Shamoan, Faith leader and Principal of one of the largest educational institute De La Salle School in Multan, spoke about the diversity in his school, in which students from different religious backgrounds study together without discrimination. He added that the school celebrates various religious festivals, such as Eid and Christmas, promoting diversity and inclusion.

Fr. Faheem Shahzad, In-Charge Priest of St. Luke Tareen Colony Church, shared his thoughts, emphasizing that humans are not masters of this world but subordinates to God. He stressed the importance of respecting every religion and building community actions to reduce environment hazards and encourage green actions including plantation drives and solid waste management.

Pir Amir Mehmood, Muslim faith leader, Imam of multiple mosques and Chairman of Qaumi Yakjehti Pakistan, stated that religion teaches individuals to distinguish between right and wrong. He said that negative thoughts influence the mind that can lead people astray. He encouraged individuals to become the kind of people others love to meet. Pir Amir also encouraged the role of podium & clergy to step forward and urge the community to take green initiatives. He added that sermons and speeches must comprise the content on climate change and worship places should lead now for the actions to build resilience for the impact of climate change.



Interfaith Dialogue session followed the warm comments from all the participants including Maulana Hannan Haidri (Muslim Faith leader), Sarfraz Clement (Christian Faith leader) and concluded with remarks from Mr. Zain Baloch (CEO Signify), who emphasized the importance of putting discussions into actions. He urged participants to implement the ideas shared and work towards making Pakistan a symbol of peace.

Declaration Signing Activity Session: A Commitment to Peace and Sustainability:

One of the most significant moments of the event was the Declaration Signing Ceremony, where religious leaders from different faiths signed a pledge document. This document outlined key commitments, including respect for all religions, the promotion of love and compassion, and the importance of fostering a spirit of unity among diverse communities. Additionally, the pledge emphasized the need for collective action toward climate sustainability, encouraging leaders and their followers to work together in preserving the environment. This activity served as a powerful symbol of solidarity, reinforcing the shared responsibility of building a more inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable world. The Pledges would be framed and displayed in worship places of all the faith leaders as a memorandum for them to keep the very spirit of the pledge alive and symbolize interfaith harmony.



Interfaith Brunch Session

Another key highlight of the event was Interfaith Harmony Brunch Session, designed to promote diversity, unity, and mutual respect among different religious communities with the idea of One Table, One world. Religious leaders from diverse faiths sat together on a single table, symbolizing harmony and inclusivity. As they enjoyed a meal together, they engaged in meaningful conversations about the possible common initiatives, daily experiences, and the climate centric conditions of Pakistan. This gathering not only fostered deeper understanding among participants but also reinforced the message of coexistence, acceptance, and the importance of building strong interfaith relationships for a more peaceful society.



Tree Plantation Activity:

The day concluded with the **Tree Plantation Activity**, a meaningful initiative symbolizing a strong commitment to combating global warming and promoting environmentally friendly practices. This activity served as a reminder of the collective responsibility to protect and nurture the planet earth. Engaging Rev. Iftikhar Moon, Allama Mujahid Abbass, Prof Wattoo, and Zain Baloch (CEO Signify), the tree plantation underscored the importance of a greener environment, encouraging participants to take proactive steps in preserving nature. Through this gesture, the event conveyed a powerful message about sustainability and the need to plant more trees for a healthier and more sustainable future. At this moment, the representative of Multan Lions Club Mr. Shafiq announced to provide hundreds of plants/trees as needed by Religious seminaries along with Waste bins to make the places a symbol for climate friendly actions.



Through this gesture, the event conveyed a powerful message about sustainability and the need to plant more trees for a healthier and more sustainable future. At this moment, the representative of Multan Lions Club Mr. Shafiq announced to provide hundreds of plants/trees as needed by Religious seminaries along with Waste bins to make the places a symbol for climate friendly actions.

Closure of the day:

Overall, the event and its activities were successfully organized under World Interfaith Harmony week observance and had a significant impact. Religious leaders from different faiths came together on a single platform to deliver a message of peace and mutual respect for each other's religions. Additionally, the tree plantation activity played a vital role in promoting environmental consciousness and encouraging eco-friendly practices. The Interfaith Brunch further reinforced the message of peace and acceptance, creating a positive and inclusive atmosphere while highlighting the importance of environmental responsibility.