

INTERFAITH INSIGHT

Interfaith last week with the Pope; next week with Eboo Patel

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Last week's visit of Pope Francis saw hundreds of thousands of people turn out to see and hear from a religious figure. It was unusual, but perhaps, a sign of hope for a world and media that too often seem fixated on violence.

For me, the most moving event took place at the site of the violent deaths of nearly 3,000 innocent people on 9/11. The pope not only met with many of the family members of the victims, but also led a multi-religious service at the Memorial Museum.

The service, called "A Witness to Peace," included alternating reflections from a rabbi and an imam, both from New York. Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove from Park Avenue Synagogue quoted St. Francis, as well as the declaration "Nostra Aetate," which was issued 50 years ago by Pope



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Paul VI as the Catholic Church's first statement addressing other religions.

Imam Khalid Latif, a New York University Muslim chaplain, quoted from the Qur'an that "one life lost is like all mankind, one life saved is like all mankind."

In contrast to the "the worst of humanity who sought to take life," he honored the first responders as the best of humanity who selflessly risked their own lives and safety to save life.

Pope Francis' prayer included: "God of peace, bring your peace to our violent world; peace in the hearts of all men and women and peace among the nations of the earth. Turn to your way of love

those whose hearts and minds are consumed with hatred and who justify killing in the name of religion."

Meditations on Peace were read from the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Christian and Muslim scriptures.

The Jewish prayer in honor of the deceased was movingly sung in Hebrew by Cantor Azi Schwartz. The service concluded with a youth choir surrounding the platform singing "Let There Be Peace on Earth."

If you didn't get a chance to experience this service I recommend watching at: [youtube.com/watch?v=hrkcjf-E2Fc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrkcjf-E2Fc)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Katie Gordon, Kaufman Institute program manager provides and introduction to next week's interfaith events in Grand Rapids:

On Oct. 8, Grand Rapids will welcome one of the most dynamic and well-respected

leaders of the interfaith movement in Eboo Patel.

As founder and president of Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), he and the IFYC team mobilize college and university campuses and student leaders to promote interfaith cooperation as a social norm. We must come to not only understand the differences that often divide us, but we also must learn to appreciate and become enriched by them. It's not just tearing down the barriers between our traditions, but building bridges of cooperation because of our traditions.

Being an interfaith leader comes down to the ability to do three things: voice, engage and act.

First, one must be able to voice the values and visions for coming together. What is it in your belief-system or tradition that motivates you to advocate for interfaith engagement?

Next, one must engage across differences. rooted in one's voice

while being open to other voices as well. This is done through reading about different traditions or building relationships from other communities. We not only engage across differences, but encourage others to do so, as well.

Finally, an interfaith leader must act. Using our voices, relationships and knowledge, we can act toward the common good together. We have seen the power of this firsthand with our Year of Interfaith Service and continue to see a ripple effect throughout the city of what this bridged social capital can do for a community.

To learn more about this movement, join us as Eboo Patel speaks on "Interfaith Leadership: Engaging Religious & Philosophical Diversity in the 21st Century" on Oct. 8.

Visit interfaithunderstanding.org to reserve your seats at the 3 p.m. Aquinas College lecture or 8 p.m. GVSU lecture.