

THE CHICAGO COALITION FOR INTERRELIGIOUS LEARNING

CATHOLICS, JEWS, MUSLIMS WORKING TOGETHER: LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

WHY PURSUE INTERRELIGIOUS LEARNING?

We share one city and one world. In Chicago we no longer think of each other as outsiders, newly arrived from some far away country. We live in a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, pluralistic society in the United States where individual and community freedoms, including the freedom of religion, are honored and protected. Muslims, Jews and Christians are each other's colleagues, classmates, neighbors, friends, and sometimes relatives.

We share common religious roots.

Followers of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam the three "Abrahamic faiths," trace their spiritual roots to Abraham. We believe in one God though we worship and call upon God in different ways and with different understandings. We share similar ethical and moral values, and some key religious practices.

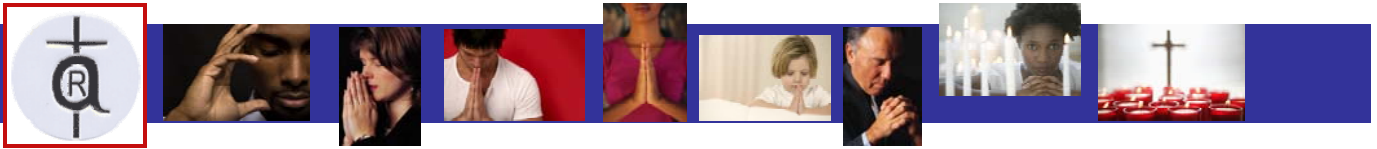
We can grow in our own faith.

Learning about each other's traditions encourages each of us to learn more about and deepen our own faith.

We are encouraged by our religious traditions to learn about and to respect others.

The Second Vatican Council reminds Catholics: "The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these [other] religions... The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men." (Nostra Aetate, #2)

(Continued on page 51)



(Continued from page 50)

In Judaism, the Torah teaches us that every human being is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This not only compels us to strive to be holy because God is holy (Leviticus 19:2), but also that we recognize the Divine spark in each person. Indeed, in the Talmud, the Rabbis teach that any act of disrespect to another human being is an act of disrespect towards God Himself (Genesis 24). Judaism also teaches that the righteous of all nations have a share in the world to come so that we must be tolerant, understanding and informed as to the various ways righteousness may be achieved.

In Islam the acceptance of human diversity, is stressed in the Qur'anic verse: "Had God so willed He could have made you (Mankind) as one community, but that He may try you He made you as you are. So vie with one another in good works. To God you will all return and then he will inform you of that in which you differed." (5:48)