



Current Issues in Prayer

January 2016

Welcome! The Pope invites people of different faiths to come together and pray:

That sincere dialogue among men and women of different faiths may produce the fruits of peace and justice.



Getting started:

I choose a comfortable place where I can recollect myself in the presence of God ... God is present around me and within me ... As I become more and more aware that He is with me, I let myself be filled with stillness and peace ...



An Interfaith Experience of a Youth:

I woke up each morning hearing *Allaahu akbar*, the *fajr* call to prayer. At the same time I heard the church bell ring for Angelus. I was born and brought up in a place where I have Muslim and Catholic neighbours. I have a mosque and a church close to my house.

My father's elder sister is married to a Shia Muslim who stays in my lane. Thus, from my childhood I was part of this interreligious environment, which I found very healthy for my personal and social growth. This also led me to take interest in various religions and cultures of the world.

As I was growing up, besides knowing about the Catholic faith I also came to know about Islam, or rather to know people who belonged to that faith and who mattered to me. The acceptance of my aunt's family for *dua* at the end of the fast, saying *bismillah* together and then enjoying the *iftar* meal meant a lot to me and my younger brother. The same response came from them to our Christmas celebrations and other religious spaces.

Today, when I remember I realize that it was faith beyond religion that I shared, and this faith was my faith in humanity which was built hand-in-hand along with people with whom I shared my life. I thank my parents for never being a barrier to my interest in interfaith dialogue. It is only because of these positive experiences that today I can connect to the power of interfaith dialogue.



Time to reflect:

How do I perceive people of other religions / faiths? How can I break down the stereotypes that I might have?

In what ways can I help to foster dialogue between the different religions / faiths in my country?



Let us pray:

God help me to open up myself more to other people of different religions / faiths ...



Inspiration:

"Peace among religions is a precondition for world peace" - *Swami Agnivesh, Indian politician.*



Hands on:

During this month, I make a commitment to pray for interfaith dialogue that renders peace in the world.

I try to seize any opportunity that might arise to talk in a compassionate way to a person of a different religion.