

# CHAPLAINS' NEWSLETTER

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שלום  
שלום  
PEACE

## DIALOGUE

Canada is changing quickly, as are our schools. While there was a time where most of us could trace our roots back to French and Irish heritage, waves of immigration following the Second World War called us to welcome countless people from across Europe and in the last 30 years, we have seen more people join our nation from countries like Poland, Lebanon and Philippines.

Many of these people share our Catholic faith.

Many others have come from areas where faith in the One God, is lived and expressed differently.

What might you and I do to better come to see our neighbours as our brothers and sisters?

What might we do to break down barriers of distrust or obstacles to charity?

Consider the following:

- Look outside of your own faith tradition and ask a neighbour to bring you to one of their worship services.
- Try attending one of the many events or open houses at the local synagogue, mosque or church. They are advertised on billboards and in the newspaper over and over again. They are often free of charge and always a way to learn something new.
- Invite one of your neighbours who you know to be an immigrant for coffee in your home. Ask them to share with you the story of how they came to Canada and what their experience has been.
- Choose not to allow or condone racial or religious slurs.
- Read, ask questions, think critically and then read some more.
- Finally, look at the King's website from time to time and think of supporting or attending one of our centre's events:

<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/academics/centres-kings/centre-for-jewish-catholic-muslim-learning/>

There are a number of past lectures already on-line that would be excellent for pastoral formation.

Michael Bechard (Rev.)  
Chaplain / King's University College  
Pastor / Christ the King University Parish

## A PRAYER FOR RELIGIOUS UNITY

“ Let us unite our efforts, animated by good will, in order to overcome all misunderstanding and disagreements. Let us resolve to overcome past prejudices and to correct the often distorted images of the other which even today can create difficulties in our relations; let us work with one another to educate all people, especially the young, to build a common future.

May God sustain us in our good intentions, and enable our communities to live consistently the truth of love, which constitutes the heart of the religious man, and is the basis of respect for the dignity of each person. May God, the merciful and compassionate One, assist us in this challenging mission, protect us, bless us and enlighten us always with the power of his love. ”

- Pope Benedict XVI at his Address to the "Catholic-Muslim Forum," The Vatican, November 2008



# (CJCMU) THE CENTRE FOR JEWISH-CATHOLIC-MUSLIM LEARNING

## WE'RE ON THE WEB:

[www.kings.uwo.ca/academics/centres-kings/centre-for-jewish-catholic-muslim-learning/](http://www.kings.uwo.ca/academics/centres-kings/centre-for-jewish-catholic-muslim-learning/)

[www.facebook.com/pages/The-Centre-for-Jewish-Catholic-Muslim-Learning](http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Centre-for-Jewish-Catholic-Muslim-Learning)

In December 2004 The Centre for Jewish-Catholic-Muslim Learning was established at King's University College at the University of Western Ontario in order to celebrate and further the renewal that was wrought in the relationship between the communities at the Second Vatican Council. At the time of its original inception, the Centre was tasked with the mandate of working toward the eventual establishment of a trilogue between all three Abrahamic faiths - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

On 1 May 2010 that mandate became a reality when The Centre for Jewish-Catholic-Muslim Learning was created by the will of the College Council and the labours of many in the community that brought this dream to fruition.

## Clickworthy

"Clickworthy" features websites that may be useful to your ministry as well as to the school communities that you serve. If you know of any web resources that you would like to share, please send your suggestions to us.

### **ECCLESIAM SUAM (ENCYCLICAL OF POPE PAUL VI ON THE CHURCH)**

The first papal document to promote interfaith dialogue was issued on 6 August 1964 by Pope Paul VI. Its aimed to "demonstrate with increasing clarity how vital it is for the world, and how greatly desired by the Catholic Church, that the two should meet together and get to know and love one another."

### **NOSTRA AETATE (DECLARATION OF THE CHURCH TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS)**

On 28 October 1965, Pope Paul VI proclaimed the Church's decision to acknowledge other religious traditions. This declaration emphasizes the unity of all of the faithful. This has been the teaching of the Church for 56 years!

### **REDEMPTORIS MISSIO (ON THE PERMANENT VALIDITY OF THE CHURCH'S MISSIONARY MANDATE)**

In this papal encyclical on mission activity Pope John Paul declares "Each member of the faithful and all Christian communities are called to practice dialogue."

### **DOMINUS IESUS (ON THE UNICITY AND SALVIFIC UNIVERSALITY OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE CHURCH)**

This Declaration, issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, affirms that inter-religious dialogue does not undermine Jesus as the only Saviour.

ALL OF THE DOCUMENTS NOTED ABOVE CAN BE VIEWED, IN FULL TEXT, AT:

<http://www.vatican.va/>

## TORAH IM DEREKH ERETZ

“ GOD’S LAW TOGETHER WITH THE WAY OF THE WORLD ”

On the pinions of time which bear us through life, God has inscribed the eternal words of His soul-inspiring doctrine, making days and weeks, months and years the heralds to proclaim His truths. Nothing would seem more fleeting than these elements of time, but to them God has entrusted the care of His holy things, thereby rendering them more imperishable and more accessible than any mouth of a priest, any monument, temple or altar could have done. Priests die, monuments decay, temples and altars fall to pieces, but time remains forever...

The Jewish calendar has a dual year, and it also recognizes a dual day. One year commences with autumn, and after ploughing its way through winter to spring and summer it closes again with autumn. The other year starts with spring, and although summer is followed by autumn and winter, it leads back again to smiling and rejuvenated spring. In the same way there is one day which begins with night, when the veil of night is spread over the cradle of creation, a day which, however great the promise of the rosy dawn and the midday brightness which follows, nevertheless ends again with night; and another day which breaks with the morning and advances to midday, and after traversing the shadows of the night leads to morning.

The night-day, which leads from night to night, is the day of the creation by which all places you reckon the periods of your earthly pilgrimage. But in the Temple of God, in the *Mikdash*, the Sanctuary, the day of light, the day which leads you from morning to morning is the unit; everything there begins with the morning and everything ends with the morning.

The autumnal year, the year which begins with *Tishri*, entering with the harvest and closing with the harvest, is the year of the creation of the earth. By it you count the years of the world, the years of your world, of your doings, of your occupation with the things of the earth. But the spring-year, which commences with the spring month of Nisan, and ends with the same month of spring, is the year of Judaism, the year of the redemption of Israel and mankind; by it you count your Jewish life, your Jewish months and festivals.

This dual reckoning of years and days, does it not strike you as the trumpet call of death and life, of annihilation and resurrection, of transitoriness and eternity? Must it not ever awaken in you the living consciousness of your dual existence, of the combination of the earthly and the transitory with the Divine and enduring in your own nature, in all your relationships, in the whole life of man upon the earth?

- From *Samson Raphael Hirsch, Collected Writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch. Edited by Jacob Breuer. New York: Published for the Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch Society by P.Feldheim, 1997. pp. 41-42.*

### HELPFUL VOCABULARY:

“Yom” = day

“Erev” = evening before

“Shabbat” = Sabbath

“Tzom” = fast-day

“Ta’anit” = fast-day

“Rosh” = beginning (literally “head”)

“Rosh Codesh” = head of the month; the beginning of the new month

## THE JEWISH CALENDAR

The traditional Jewish calendar, like the traditional Islamic calendar, does not correspond to the Western (Christian-based) calendar. Instead, since the Middle Ages the Jewish calendar has been dated from the creation of the world (“anno mundi” or A.M.), which is conventionally said to have been in 3760 B.C.E. on the Western calendar. For convenience, many Jews use the standard Western calendar but, instead of using the Christian designations B.C. and A.D., they tend to use the religiously neutral designations B.C.E. and C.E.

Unlike the Western calendar, the Jewish calendar is primarily *lunar* that is, calculated by the cycles of the moon; rather than *solar*, or based on the cycles of the sun. Since a lunar month is about 29.5 days, and the average solar month is almost 30.5 days, Second Adar (“a leap month”) is inserted regularly, to bring the Jewish calendar back into alignment.

Another distinctive characteristic of the Jewish way of counting time is that each day begins at sundown of the evening before, not at midnight as on our *civil* calendar.

## SHALOSH REGALIM

“ PILGRIMAGE FESTIVALS “

In biblical times all adult males were required to make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem, so long as they were physically capable. These men would typically set out on their journey during three specified festivals - the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths.

### Passover (Pesach, The Feast of Unleavened Bread)

Celebrated during the month of Nisan, the Passover commemorates the Exodus, the release of the Israelites under Moses from slavery to the Egyptians. The Passover is told in the Book of Exodus chapters 5-14, especially chapters 12-13, where the basic ritual of the Passover is outlined. Literally, the name Passover refers to the Angel of Death which passed over the houses of the Israelites, whose doorways had been marked with lamb's blood, while firstborn children and animals of the Egyptians were killed.

### Pentecost (Shavuot, The Feast of Weeks)

Seven weeks after Passover, Pentecost (originally an agricultural festival) is celebrated to mark the beginning of the summer harvest. According to biblical law, the “firstfruits” of the harvest were brought to the Temple in thanksgiving to God (Ex 23.16). Pentecost was later associated with Moses receiving the Torah on Mount Sinai, a celebration of God's covenant relationship with the Jews. Customarily, many Jews spend the night before Pentecost studying the Torah, reflecting an ancient legend that on the morning of the giving of the Torah, the Israelites slept in and almost missed their opportunity! This all-night vigil is a sign of eagerness for God's Law, and repentance for the “laziness” of their ancestors.

“Three times a year all your men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose.”  
(Deut. 16.16)

### Sukkot (The Feast of Booths/Tabernacles)

The commandment to observe Sukkot is found in the Books of Exodus (23.14-16), Leviticus (23.33-44), and Deuteronomy (16.13-17). Originally an agricultural festival to mark the end of the autumn harvest, Sukkot is held on the 15th of *Tishrei*, the seventh month. As the *sukkot* were probably the temporary shelters that the harvest workers lived in, today, many Jews build temporary sukkahs, cover them with greenery, and eat their meals in them for one week. Theologically, this acts as a reminder of God's providence to the Israelites during the years of their wandering in the desert.

## JEWISH FESTIVALS & HOLY DAYS

**Tisha b'Av (9-8 August 2011):** A day to commemorate the tragedies which have befallen Jews.

**Rosh HaShanah (28-30 September 2011):** Traditionally a celebration of the birthdays of Adam and Eve, Rosh HaShanah (New Year) marks the beginning of *yamim noraim*, the ten Days of Awe, when Jews examine their consciences, seek forgiveness of their sins, and try to repair whatever damage they have done.

**Yom Kippur (7-8 October 2011):** The most solemn day on the Jewish calendar when most Jews attend synagogue for most of or all of the day. Here they pray, fast, and abstain from all sorts of pleasure and luxuries.

**Simchat Torah (19 October 2011):** This celebration of God's gift of the Scriptures to the Jewish people is observed nine days after Sukkot with festive dancing. It marks the end of the annual cycle of Torah readings for each Sabbath.

**Hanukkah (20-28 December 2011):** Commemorates the victory of the Maccabees (a family of devout Jews) over their Greek-Syrian occupiers (the Seleucids). In addition to lighting the *menorah*, children play games with a *dreidel*, and the traditional Hanukkah food, *latkes*, is enjoyed.

**Purim (7-8 March 2012):** A joyful, carnival-like festival at which costumes are worn, gifts are given, special foods are served, and noisemakers are used in remembrance of the sacrifice of the king's favoured wife Esther.

## THE HIJRI CALENDAR

The Islamic calendar, also known as the Hijri calendar, is a lunar based calendar that consists of 12 lunar months for a year of 354 to 355 days. Muslims all over the world use the Hijri calendar to mark holy months, days and festivals. The commencement of each month is based on the physical eye-witnessing of the new moon, not through calculation. Each month is 29 days if the new moon is sighted or 30 days if it is not sighted. This can cause a slight variation from location to location by a day or two because one population may not have sighted the moon while another has. Thus, it is not uncommon for Muslims to celebrate festivities a day apart across nations.

There are many significant days and months in the Hijri calendar. For example, the month of Ramadan, venerated for its prescription of fasting from food and drink during daylight hours is the ninth month within the Hijri calendar. The Eid-el-Fitr, or the Breaking of the Fast Festival, occurs at the month's end. The month of Dhul Hijja, deriving its name from the Hajj, or Pilgrimage, initiates the once in a lifetime obligation upon Muslims to visit the holy city of Mecca to perform rituals. There are other months and days which hold significance, but these are the most revered and important in the Hijri calendar.

The Islamic calendar gets the name *Hijri* from its starting period. Having endured several years of persecution in his hometown of Mecca and learning of an assassination plot on his life, Muhammad and his followers migrated to safety in Medina, a city about 340 kilometres away. This historically significant event occurred in 622 C.E. and is called the *Hijra* in Arabic, or migration. It marks the first year of the Hijri calendar. Today, we are in 1432 A.H. (*After Hijra*).

## MUSLIM FESTIVALS & HOLY DAYS

### RAMADAN (1 August 2011):

Ramadan is the ninth month and the holiest season in the Hijri calendar. During Ramadan Muslims observe daytime fasting; abstain from ill thought, word, and deed; and practice intense study of the Qur'an. These disciplines are of particular importance for ensuring the sacredness of the season, redirecting thoughts, words, and actions completely upon Allah. Specifically, Ramadan commemorates the most important event in Islamic history - the composition of the Qur'an as told by Allah and written by the Prophet Muhammad.

### DID YOU KNOW...

Eid-el-Fitr and Eid-el-Adha are the only two Muslim festivals laid down in Islamic law!

### EID-EL-FITR (1 August 2011):

The end of Ramadan is celebrated with the festival of Eid-el-Fitr (*Eid*), an Islamic holiday which lasts three days. General rituals of Eid include decorating homes, dressing in one's best attire, hosting communal celebrations, giving gifts, offering prayers at sunrise, and making honest attempts to overcome differences. Eid is also a time when Muslims give thanksgiving to Allah for assisting them with self-control during Ramadan. The significances of this season are the communal aspects of fasting which are recalled: concern for the poor, charity, and proper worship.

### EID-EL-ADHA (6 November 2011):

Commonly referred to as the "Greater Eid," because Eid-el-Adha lasts one day longer than Eid-el-Fitr (the "Lesser Eid"), this Islamic holiday commemorates Abraham's complete obedience to Allah. Abraham willed to sacrifice his eldest son, Ishmael, as Allah challenged him to do. Thus, the basis of this festival lies in the Qur'an. Celebrations of this Eid begin after the *Hajj*, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca when personal submission to Allah and His wishes are fresh in the mind of the pilgrims. The sacrifice of domestic animals, typically sheep, may also be carried out by Muslims who can afford it - meat is divided between family and the poor.



## THE PILLARS OF ISLAM

There are five basic religious practices that all Muslims, regardless of which sect they belong to, worship by. Although some sects have deemed other religious activities obligatory, the five Pillars of Islam which Muslims must fulfill in their lifetime are: *Shahadah* (testimony of the faith), *Salat* (daily prayer), *Zakat* (concern for the poor), *Sawm* (fasting as a means of self-purification), and *Hajj* (a pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Mecca). Ultimately, these pillars of faith mark the foundation of Muslim thought and action in this life, and are believed to sanction rewards in life after death.

### Shahadah

The first pillar of Islam is to profess faith in Allah, the One God Almighty, and Muhammad, His Prophet. Although do not pray to Muhammad who was not human but divine, Muhammad is highly regarded for teaching the revelation of Allah to humankind. Belief in his prophecies signifies belief in the traditions which he laid down.

The *Shahadah*, also known as the *Kalimah*, is usually professed in Arabic with these words: "La ilaha ila Allah; Muhammadur-rasul Allah;" literally defined, "There is no God but Allah; Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."

### Salat

The second pillar of Islam is prayer. Muslims are obligated to pray five times a day, once at: dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and night. It is hoped that by praying five times a day, complete attention will be placed on Allah. Although Salat may be carried out individually or communally, distinctive features of Islamic prayer include reciting verses from the Qur'an in Arabic, the language of the revelation, and assuming various postures such as standing, bowing, prostrating and sitting.

### Zakat

Charity by means of alms-giving is the third pillar of Islam. According to Islamic theology wealth belongs to God alone and man holds it in trust for God. Muslim calculate their own zakat individually, typically 2.5% of their annual earnings., however they may choose to donate more as an act of voluntary charity if they so wish. Ultimately, the purpose of *Zakat* is to help bridge the gap between the rich and the poor.

### Sawm

Fasting is the fourth pillar of Islam. In addition to fasting during the month of Ramadan, all able bodied Muslims over the age of eleven are encouraged to fast on other days indicated throughout the year. Reading the Qur'an is also promoted on these days. Those unable to fast, for physical reasons per se, must feed a needy person to compensate for every fast missed. In Islam, fasting is a means of self-purification which is not to be practiced in excess - ascetic practices such as constant fasting and celibacy are prohibited.

### Hajj

The fifth and final pillar of Islam involves a pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. As Muslims regard this pilgrimage as the highest form of worship, all able bodied Muslim adults are obligated to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their life. Robbed in simple white clothes to stand equally before Allah, the pilgrimage to Mecca occurs during the month of Dhu al-Hijjah on the Hijri calendar. Upon their return, pilgrims are honoured in their community for committing to constant self-reflection and improvement - fruits of their journey.

### FUTURE EDITIONS:

Your feedback is essential. Please let us know what you think of this newsletter and topics that you would like us to address in future issues. We want this newsletter to be something which benefits the great work that we are doing together in support of Catholic Education.

## BEHIND OUR DOORS

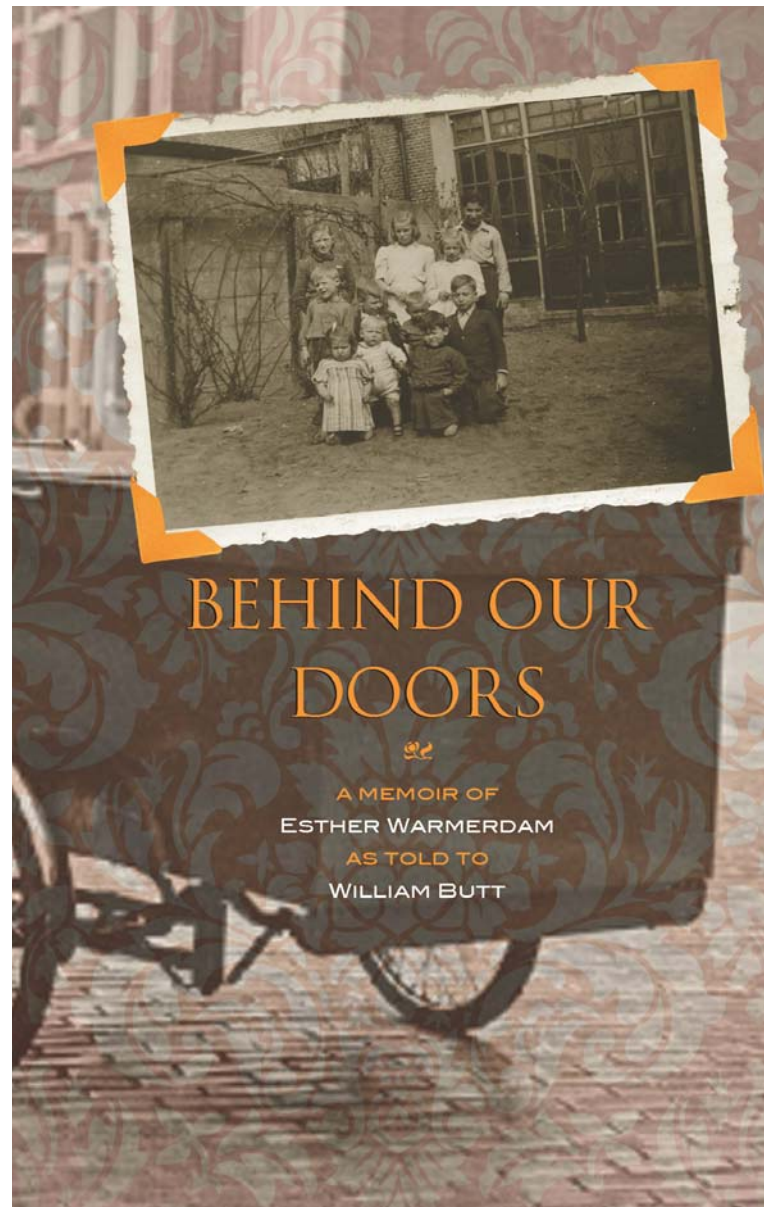
A Memoir of Esther Wamerdam as told to William Butt

The memoir tells the story of Esther (Etha) Wamerdam's experience growing up in Nazi-occupied Holland, and her family's brave efforts to save the lives of hundreds of Jewish children and young adults. Unlike many Holocaust memoirs that focus on the hidden, this memoir tells the story of the hiders, of how Etha's Catholic parents, Huubertes and Marie Wamerdam, hid approximately 250 Jews. Huubertes was a shopkeeper who transported the children to his house in a wooden crate attached to his bicycle. Marie fed, clothed, and nurtured them. With eleven of her own siblings, Etha and her family made countless sacrifices to do what they did, and the memoir highlights the risks and dangers to the entire family, the secrecy that the children were forced to maintain, as well as the relationships of love and friendship that developed between those who were being hidden and those who were hiding them.

An educational study guide was also developed by King's University College graduate, Laurie Schultz, for use in secondary schools.

Both the Memoir and the accompanying Study Guide are being published by The Althouse Press. Each are excellent resources for teachers and educators.

For more information, contact us at:  
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