

Harmony Day Celebrations!

Harmony Day, 21 March, celebrates Australia's cultural diversity. It's about inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone. It has been held for the past fifteen years in Australia to coincide with the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The message of Harmony Day is that everyone belongs. It's a day to celebrate Australia's diversity – a day of cultural respect for everyone who calls Australia home. EVERY day should be HARMONY DAY. Embrace your similarities with your neighbors and work toward Toowoomba being a model city of peace and harmony.



20 March 2015 – Gathering of youths from diverse backgrounds to share friendship and dinner at the Youth Harmony Dinner. This event was jointly organized by Pure Land Learning College Association, Young Catholics, Anglican Church Southern Queensland, and Islamic Interfaith and Multicultural Association of Toowoomba



17 March 2015 – John McVeigh (third from left), together with faith and community representatives reading the Goodwill Peace Prayer at the Harmony day celebrations at Village Green.

Women's Forum – Women Family, Education 7 March 2015

A reflection from Reverend Dorothy Woodside:

Sister Beryl Gleeson set the tone for the whole day. There was such an air of Love and mutual understanding. There was also a smorgasbord of learning for us. Venerable Wu Ping opened our eyes to the importance of the first few years of a child's life even from the moment of conception. A mother's duty is to provide a loving peaceful home where the developing child can learn and grow in a healthy educational environment during the years when it is most receptive and its brain most able to absorb information. Even in the womb interacting with the foetus in a loving welcoming way gives the baby the best start in life.



Reverend Penny Jones explained the ancient wisdom of the labyrinth, and in the afternoon provided the opportunity for all to experience the peace and enlightenment that walking the labyrinth can bring. Wonderful!

Nicole Rangiira shared with us some of her experiences as a Pastoral Carer and brought tears to many an eye. What a privilege to share the spiritual experiences of people in pain and in extremis. She has inspired all of us to explore our own spirituality and to stand firm in the knowledge of our own goodness and worth.

Glenda Humes and Judith Standen gave us an insight into the closeness and warmth of their aboriginal heritage and spirituality. Their humour and joy in each other's company warmed our hearts.

Debbie Ryan gave us an insight into the community of St Ursula's School and the methods used to engender the spirituality of the young students in her care. What a privilege for those young people to have such support in their most vulnerable years.



Panel members from left: Kim Walmsley, Judith Standen, Nicole Rangiira, Venerable Wu Ping, Glenda Humes, Debbie Ryan

Our Panel discussion brought up some insightful questions and to me the answers underlined the message of the whole day that we are all worthy beings capable of accessing the spiritual wisdom, which is our heritage.

I had a roving commission in the afternoon to see the group activities. Everyone had an opportunity to experience all three circles. The yarning circle drew all the participants together as they shared their stories, and all had stories to share. The labyrinth gave an opportunity for quiet contemplation, and the Creative circle was a focus of laughter and new experience as we learned to let go and allow our creative juices to flow.

All in all, a remarkable spiritual experience. Thank you Pure Land Learning College and the Ladies Committee for bringing this about.



Creative Circle



Yarning Circle



Labyrinth Circle

Scriptures and Human Relations Symposium

The topic of an interfaith forum jointly organized by Toowoomba Churches Together and Pure Land Learning College Association Inc. held on Saturday 14 March 2015, was Scriptures and Human Relations. The findings of the guest speakers were inspiring. Rather than seeing difference between the religious denominations and the words of the scriptures, they found the similarities. We, the participants, arrived as people mostly unknown to each other and left as friends.



The day involved acknowledgement of our Aboriginal custodians of the land, a prayer for peace and love organized by a catholic priest, welcome addresses by the organisers and explanations by Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu representatives of the community, mostly from the Toowoomba region.

Some of the feedback received from participants were:

Diversity is full of richness and blessings if we continue to relate to each other with an open heart.

We need to remember the purpose of language is not another pair of eyes but 'to speak to the ear and to the heart.'

As long as humans continue to exist, we will continue to have differences. However, if we hold on to the golden rule of compassion rather than I am right and you are wrong, we can help to make this world a better place to live.

Symposiums and dialogues are excellent connectors that could help one to understand each other better.



Our Emcee, The Revd Canon Richard Tutin, General Secretary of Queensland Churches Together



Dialogue Circles



Panel Discussion (From left) V. Rev. Brian Sparksman, Ariel Heber, Arsalan Mozaffari Falarti, Siddharth Bhardwa, Venerable Wu Ping, and The Revd Canon Richard Tutin

Voices of Faith

Radio 102.7FM Voices of Faith – a program to share the richness and beauty of our diverse community's beliefs, customs and practices here in our wonderful city of Toowoomba! It will be launched this month, starting 5 April 2015, so tune in every Sunday from 7-8pm. This community program is proudly sponsored by Pure Land Learning College Association.

If you would like to be a part of this series, please contact the Multi-faith Multicultural Centre right away. This is your opportunity to tell the community about your group and tradition at no cost to you!

57 West Street, Toowoomba
www.interfaith-harmony.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MMC.Toowoomba>

Faith Sharing



You are invited to join us for the next session on 'Faith and Environment - In conversation with a Christian, a Buddhist and an Unitarian' Saturday, 25 April 2015

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