

Dear, Orhan Cicek, Executive Advisor of the Australian Intercultural Society

Dear, Ali Gungor, General Coordinator of Selimiye Foundation

Reverend Rob Brown, General Secretary of Uniting Church Synod

Reverend Tony Johnson, Strathmore Uniting Church

Dear, Ramzi Elsayed, President of Islamic Council of Victoria

And Dear Honoured guests,

First of all, I would like to express my deep and heartfelt sympathy to the friends and families of those who lost their lives in the bushfires over the weekend. Our community was deeply saddened when we heard this anguishing incident. We share in their grief and send them our love.

Dear Guests,

We gathered here to express our firm and consistent will and desire to gain the peace in the world. I do not think if there is a religion envisaging war and terror instead of peace. If there is so, either it is not regarded as a religion or there is a misunderstanding and misleading. Islam, same as the other divine religions, envisages the peace in the world.

One of the many definitions of the word Islam is peace. Islam, the religion has introduced to humanity important principles to guide us through life. One of these principles is respect for fellow human beings.

In Islam, humans are regarded as equal in the eyes of the law. Every human being is considered Allah's sacred servant, and all have access to the same rights. We are all Allah's creations and are Adam's children. Loving Allah's creations is one of the most important fundamentals of the Islamic religion. The famous Anatolian Mystic Yunus Emre makes this point clear in the following words...

**We love the created, because of our love for the Creator.**

Like a garden with flowers of varying colours, our world contains people and communities from varying beliefs and cultures. As these differences will always

exist, we must learn to live in peace and harmony with one another, and try to benefit from our differences through mutual respect and toleration. This is why people of our generation, both individuals and communities must firmly believe in living together in peace and harmony, without conflict, and we must strive towards finding solutions to this effect. Islam and the other revealed religions for that matter, all emphasize the importance of human salvation and happiness. The fundamental message of these universal religions is one of peace, well-being and respect for one another.

Despite our differing beliefs, thoughts and opinions, we must learn from history, as well as our own accumulated experiences, and make every effort to strive towards living in peace, and toleration and having mutual respect for those we would consider as “others”. Respecting only ones own nationality and religion, and having complete disregards for others is nothing but a selfish act. This type of approach, no matter how well concealed, with false promises of peace, love, respect etc.., will not benefit humanity in any way. I believe that as long as we respect and value people because they are human, this world we live in will be more peaceful and tranquil. This earth we live in has provided shelter to many people over the centuries, and I have no doubt it will continue to do so, as long as we don’t fall victim to our own self interests and vain desires.

I would like to finalise my speech with the seven advices of Great Mawlana, and then we will pray:

In Generosity and Helping Others, be like a River

In Compassion and Grace, be like the Sun

In Concealing Others' Faults, be like the Night

In Anger and Fury, be like the Dead

In Modesty and Humility, be like the Earth

In Tolerance, be like the Sea

Either appear as you are or Be as you appear.

LET'S PRAY:

Almighty God, as people here in the presence of the members of different faiths before you, we ask your amnesty, remission and help. An amnesty that will make all heartless cruels regret of what they have committed. We ask your

remission, embracing all humanity, and a help that will make those who come together for the world's peace successful.

Almighty God, you have created this world for us. We want peace and to live in peace. Do not provide opportunity for those wishing to get faction. Do not give opportunity for those who want to turn this beautiful World to a battleground.

Almighty God, give us peace and tranquillity in this world, make people understand each other, and finally grant us to live together as respectful individuals to the humanity, to the society and to the environment as a whole.

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AMEN.