



NEWS ARCHIVE:

## Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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### Multi-faith “Festival of Faith” marks 25th anniversary of Assisi gathering with “Pilgrimage of Peace” theme



Kimble Worme played the drum to lead a traditional First Nations round dance to conclude the Festival of Faith held Oct. 30 jointly hosted by Multi-Faith Saskatoon and the Catholic diocese.

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

Multi-Faith Saskatoon’s 27<sup>th</sup> annual Festival of Faith was held Oct. 30 at St. Patrick Parish in Saskatoon, co-hosted by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

The gathering theme “Pilgrims of Peace” marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pope John Paul II’s inter-religious prayer for peace in Assisi, Italy in 1986.

The Festival of Faith opened with the blowing of the Shofar horn by Cantor

Neil Schwartz in an ancient Jewish tradition of summoning the people – in this case, calling all to prayer.

Rev. Colin Clay, president of Multi-Faith Saskatoon, then welcomed those gathered for the Saskatoon celebration, as did St. Patrick pastor Rev. Kevin McGee.

“We gather as pilgrims on the walk of faith – a spiritual path holding before us the common goal of peace,” McGee said. “We are invited to listen to these prayers with an open and generous heart, and wherever possible, allow them to lead us to a deeper commitment as architects of a more peace-filled, loving world.”

Bishop Donald Bolen described the inter-religious prayer pilgrimage in Assisi 25 years ago, and noted that the anniversary was also recently marked again in Assisi by Pope Benedict XVI, “who was joined by the leaders of the world’s religions and by other Christian communities – and this time, by people of no religion who were committed to dialogue, committed to peace.”



Cantor Neil Schwartz of the Saskatoon Jewish community pours water into the common bowl as Heather Fenyes prayed from the Jewish tradition during a Festival of Faith in Saskatoon Oct. 30.

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During the Saskatoon celebration,

representatives of different religious traditions came forward to pour water into a common bowl, interspersed between prayers, chants, readings, and songs.



“We are one world,” Bolen said of the imagery of the water. “We are all called to nurture in our different ways, the common good, in pursuing the goal of peace in our region and in our world.”

First Nations elders Maria and Walter Linklater were first to pour water into the bowl to prayers of their tradition; followed by Bolen and Sr. Donna Purdy representing the Catholic Christian community, and Isha Srikumar of the Hindu tradition.

Other representatives participating in the water ceremony included retired Lutheran Bishop Allan Grudahl (retired), Unitarian chaplain Ken Crush, Muslim representative Dr. Ahmed Shoker, Anglican priest Rev. Jan Bigland-Pritchard, as well as Heather Fenyes and Cantor Neil Schwartz of the local Jewish community, and Jubin Nakhai of the Baha’i tradition.

Also leading prayers for the water ceremony were Maqsood Ahmed Mansoor of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, Sikh representative Gurudev Tumber, Trung Duong and Annie Dinh of the Vietnamese Buddhist community, Rev. Ron McConnell, chair of the River Bend Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, and Ukrainian Catholic Bishop Bryan Bayda of the eparchy of Saskatoon, as well as by representatives of the Doukhorbor community.



The Saskatoon Festival of Faith included chants in Sanskrit and English by the Sai Baba young people’s group (Hindu), and selections by the Saskatoon Klezmer Band (Jewish), led by local composer David Kaplan.

The Filipino El Shaddai Choir sang two selections, accompanying a dance by Filipino children. The Japanese Children’s choir also sang during the festival, and children from the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam presented poems about peace in English and Erdu.

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A musical selection “Prayer for Peace” composed by David Kaplan for the event was presented by a combined choir from Bishop Filevich Ukrainian Bilingual School (directed by Cathy Schabel) and Saskatoon Men’s Chorus (directed by Lynn Driedger), accompanied by Sister Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, on the organ, along with the Saskatoon Klezmer Band, under Kaplan’s direction.

Finally, all those assembled committed themselves to the “Assisi Decalogue for Peace” – a series of statements calling for fostering a culture of dialogue; urging leaders to create a world of solidarity and peace based on justice; eliminating terrorism and violence; and educating people to “help bring about a peaceful and fraternal coexistence between people of different ethnic groups, cultures and religions.”

Other points of commitment in the Decalogue included taking the side of the poor and helpless, encouraging friendship and understanding, and engaging in forgiveness. “We commit ourselves to making every effort to offer others hope for justice and peace, refusing to be resigned to violence and evil,” the Decalogue continued.

The Festival of Faith ended in a round dance through the church, led by First Nations drummer Kimble Worms.



Elders Walter and Maria (right) Linklater led a round dance to conclude a Festival of Faith held Oct. 30 in Saskatoon. They were followed by Rev. Colin Clay, president of Multi-Faith Saskatoon, Bishop Don Bolen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, and retired Lutheran Bishop Allan Grudahl and other leaders of the multi-faith event.