

BEARERS of HOPE!

Recently with a number of priests from my local area I was fortunate enough to listen to a fascinating talk by a Columban Catholic priest Rev. Dr. Patrick McInerney. This extraordinary man in many ways is an ecumenist who specializes in Christian-Islamic dialogue. Below are some valuable insights that he generously shared;

- *Christianity is not a religion of reciprocity it is a religion of grace and love to both give and share. This makes it distinctive to the Jewish and the Islamic religions as they are definitely religions of reciprocity. Practically this means that dialogue nearly always comes from a Christian initiative.*
- *For all major world religions in times of difficulty the place of divine assistance is acknowledged as being vital. This assistance is based on hope rather than just optimism. Hope in a religious sense is a yearning for divine assistance whereas optimism is a good human attitude.*
- *Pope Francis has a particular genius in creating and sustaining effective inter religious dialogue, in this dialogue he often speaks of the place of hope and our common home being planet earth.*

Inter- religious dialogue is a constant and vital challenge for people of all religions to value and much needs to be done yet enormous progress has also happened over the last few decades.

The profound words of the Prophet Isaiah (Chapter 26 verse 3) are worth remembering; *“The steadfast of mind God will keep in perfect peace because they trust in you.” Fr Martin R Maunsell*