



2022 OVERVIEW



ACEIR

ARCHDIOCESAN COMMISSION
FOR ECUMENISM AND
INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	3
OUR MISSION	4
THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMISSION	5
VISIT TO AL FAISAL COLLEGE	6
ARCHBISHOP'S IFTAR DINNER	7-8
NOSTRA AETATE WORKING PARTY	9
SHOAH MEMORIAL SERVICE	10
ARMENIAN CATHOLIC PATRIARCH IN SYDNEY	11
NOSTRA AETATE WORKING PARTY DINNER	12
ECUMENISM	13
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	14
STEPS FORWARD	15

ACEIR OVERVIEW 2022

More than half a century after the Second Vatican Council it is imperative that we continue to push forward in action and cooperation with cultures and faiths, careful not to rest comfortably on the laurels of our friendships, dialogues and partnerships, strong and genuine though they may be. So with renewed energy and resolve the Commission focuses on what we can do together on the way forward, pursuing truth, as children of God and people of faith; I hope that this commitment is clear in the pages that follow.

This year we have shone the light sharply on the Abrahamic faiths, built on our two joint-partnerships of the Christian-Muslim Interfaith Commitment and the Statement in celebration of 50 years of Nostra Aetate. Both of these were intended to foster collaboration, and in this past year, we have continued to direct our efforts in the area of education which has proven to be a powerful and effective vehicle for strengthening connections and furthering growth.

It is vitally important, I feel, that we do not lose the sense of hope and achievement in the field of interfaith dialogue as we move beyond the perhaps romantic early stages and into the grit of everyday life, its surprising twists and uncertain turns. For me, each year, this is an invigorating practice as we review together our accomplishments, and look towards the work we still hope to achieve in the future.

May these pages be also a source of hope and pride to us all as we continue to labour in the fields of God's Creation •

Sr Giovanni Farquersj
Chair Archdiocesan Commission
for Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Relations



ACEIR MEMBERS

FROM TOP LEFT TO TOP RIGHT: **Sr Giovanni FARQUER** rsj Director of the Archdiocese of Sydney Commission for Ecumenical & Inter-Religious Relations • **Rev Fr Gerard KELLY** President of the Catholic Institute of Sydney and lecturer in Theology • **Dr Anne CUMMINS** Director of Catholic Schools NSW Limited, Catholic Employment Relations Limited (Chair) and College of Health Science and Asia Pacific International College (ECA Group) • **Dr Emmanuel NATHAN** Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies and Comparative Theology at ACU and Director of the Research Centre for Studies of the Second Vatican Council • **Lea LA MASCOLO** Australian business person and founding director of a retail company based in Sydney • **Selina HASHAM** CEO of Harvest Journeys Australia • **Sue MOFFAT** has recently retired from a career in Catholic Education • **Sr Elizabeth DELANEY** Sister of the Good Samaritan and the Vicar for Consecrated Life in the Archdiocese of Sydney • **Rev. Fr Ronald MAREE** Parish Priest at St Anthony of Padua, Austral • **Michael Kenny** Manager, Communications and News Media for the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney.

THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMISSION

- ASSIST THE ARCHBISHOP IN ENSURING THAT ECUMENISM AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IS AN ORGANIC PART OF THE LIFE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE
- GENERATE RESOURCES IN ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH MATTERS
- COOPERATE WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS IN PRAYER AND GOOD WORKS
- INITIATE, ENCOURAGE AND DEVELOP PRACTICAL WAYS OF BUILDING BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING AND CO-OPERATION BETWEEN CHURCHES
- MOTIVATE CATHOLICS TO TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE TO WORK ACTIVELY TOWARDS 'FULL VISIBLE UNITY'
- REPRESENT THE ARCHDIOCESE IN ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH AFFAIRS
- FOSTER A DEEP APPRECIATION OF THE UNIQUE BOND BETWEEN JEWS AND CHRISTIANS
- ENCOURAGE DIALOGUE BETWEEN PEOPLE OF ALL RELIGIOUS FAITH TRADITIONS SO THAT WE MIGHT UNDERSTAND, BE ENRICHED AND WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF SOCIETY
- WORK WHERE APPROPRIATE WITH OTHER COMMISSIONS IN AUSTRALIA NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY.

VISIT TO AL FAISAL COLLEGE

17th FEBRUARY 2022

Sr Giovanni led a delegation from the Archdiocese and Australian Catholic University on a Visit to Al Faisal College in Auburn. Shafiq Abdullah Kahn warmly welcomed Sr Giovanni, Anne Cummins, Chris Meney, Jacqui Garber and Adam Wesselinoff from Catholic Weekly together with Assoc. Prof Miriam Tanti, Dr Monica Wong, Dr Michael Casey and Chrissy Monteleone from ACU, North Sydney and Strathfield campuses. Year 12 students led the welcome address and invited speeches from Sheikh Shafiq Abdullah Kahn, Dr Intaj Ali, Director General of Education for Al Faisal College. Dr Ali proudly shared the HSC results from 2021, of 131 students all received a university offer and 60 student received an ATAR of 90 or over. An outstanding result. Sr Giovanni read a speech on behalf of Bishop Michael McKenna and Miriam Tanti on behalf of Hayden Ramsey who sent their apologies. The general response from all guests was overwhelming endorsement of the words of Bishop Michael McKenna and Professor Hayden Ramsey. All guests enjoyed a lunch with members of Board of

Directors and teachers and many connections resulted. On behalf of the group, I express deep appreciation for the warm words of welcome and generous hospitality extended to us by our host, Sheikh Abdul Shafiq Khan, Dr Intaj Ali and representatives of the Staff and Student Community of Al Faisal College. Congratulations on the outstanding academic achievements of 2021 and most of all for the inspiration and renewed energy we derive from the genuine Spirit of love, respect and Human Fraternity reflected in every aspect of this memorable occasion •

Sr Giovanni Farquer rsj



■ Dr Itaj Ali ■ School Captains



■ Senior School Students



■ School Assembly

ARCHBISHOP HOSTS IFTAR DINNER 2022 AT CATHEDRAL HOUSE

On Wednesday, 6th April Archbishop Anthony Fisher hosted his annual Iftar Dinner. This event has been a key plank in the interfaith work of the ACEIR for over a decade, and an enduring symbol of the brotherhood shared between people of faith throughout the city of Sydney. An Iftar is the breaking of the fast observed after sundown by members of the Muslim faith during Ramadan, but more than that it is a time to express charity and connection in the shared act of breaking bread and sharing a meal. As such, it is a time when the Archbishop welcomes guests into his home to build and maintain strong friendships with brothers and sisters of faith. One consistent feature of this dinner is that it is a multicultural and multi-faith event. Representatives

from a variety of Christian groups, Jewish communities within Sydney, Hindu, Buddhist, and many more are among the guests. The dinner is truly an expression of the work of the ACEIR and the enduring friendships which have been created and are a feature of the people of faith, all faiths, across Sydney. This year in his address Archbishop Anthony spoke about the importance of faith and belief within both public and private spheres of life. He called for cooperation of people who hold fast to these things in order to 'seek to hang the tapestry of faith, hope, and love boldly in the squares both public and private so that we can work together for a better and brighter world.' The Archbishop's address was, as ever, followed by a short response from a representative of the Muslim faith •



■ Archbishop & Bishop Bartholomew Chariouspolis ■ Archbishop & Archbishop Kanishka Raffel



■ Archbishop & Sheikh Shafiq R Abdullah Khan ■ Archbishop & Jeremy Jones ■ Bishop Terry Brady and Kathryn Palmer

IFTAR DINNER 2022

2011-2012-2013-2014-2015-2017-2018-2019-2021-2022



■ Archbishop, Sheikh Shafiq Kahn & Dr Intaj Ali

■ Archbishop, Sr Giovanni and Staff from Al Faisal Colleges and Bishop Richard Umbers



■ Mrs Safia Khan Hassanein, Sheikh Shafiq Khan, Sr Giovanni Farquer Dr Intaj Ali, Chris Meney

■ Sr Elizabeth Delaney sgs, Jeremy Jones AM, Bishop Andrew Sempell, Ahmet Polat, Ida Walker

■ Francois Kunc and Vic Alhadeff



■ Madenia Abdurahman, Pravrajika Gayatrishna & Sonali Luthra

■ Sr Clare Koch, Bishop Batholomew Charioupolis & Joseph Payne

■ Archbishop Daniel, Archbishop Metrololitan Basilius & Bishop Richard Umbers

■ Stepan Kerkyasharian AO



■ Lisa Buxton Welcome to Country

■ Rabbi Elton and Sheikh Shadi Alsuleiman at Archbishop's table

■ Sr Elizabeth Delaney table



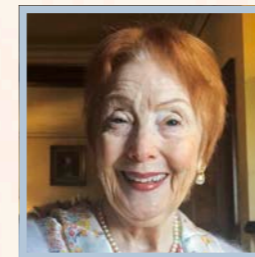
■ Sheikh Shafiq R Abdullah Kahn table

■ Archbishop's Table

NOSTRA AETATE WORKING PARTY

The Nostra Aetate Working Party was formed after the Commission office visited the Dicastery for Inter-religious Dialogue in 2019. In conversation with Cardinal Ayuso and other members of the Dicastery office we discussed the work of the Commission. Having identified education as an area of much potential growth, ACEIR, under the auspices of the Archbishop, engaged with Sydney Catholic Schools, ACU, the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry to coordinate an educational project aimed at fostering relations, understanding, and cooperation between Catholic and Jewish teachers and students. This was a natural development from the 2015 declaration which has been an ongoing commitment of ACEIR. In this past year we have made significant progress in seeing this project realized and enacted. In Term 1, ACU coordinated a short course on Catholic-Jewish relations which was offered for teachers as part of their professional development. Held online, it took place weekly for an hour over four weeks. Two speakers from

the Catholic tradition were joined by two from the Jewish tradition. This was an excellent opportunity for the fostering of understanding through the deepening of knowledge. The course was attended by more than sixty teachers and other participants. Later in the year Sydney Catholic Schools coordinated a pilot project, involving two Catholic, and one Jewish, secondary schools which provided direct engagement between Catholic and Jewish students and educators. The programme consisted of professional development for five teachers, an infused unit taught to students within the schools, and a full day immersion for thirty-two Catholic school students within the Jewish school to deepen understanding and build personal relationships. Already we have made strides in this project. Both pilot projects were a great success and were a learning experience for the members of the working party. There is still much to do, building on these first steps, and deepening engagement and understanding across both sides of the partnership •



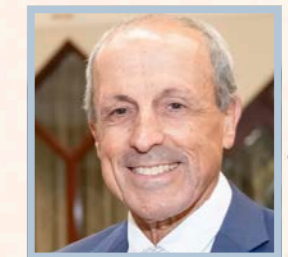
Sr Giovanni FARQUER rsj
Director, ACEIR



Ms Jillian SEGAL AO
President, Executive Council of Australian Jewry



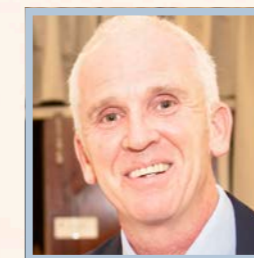
Mr Peter WERTHEIM AM
Co-CEO Executive Council of Australian Jewry



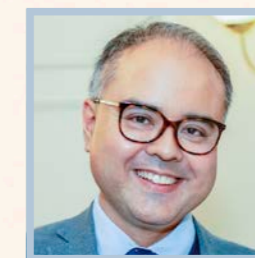
Mr Vic ALHADEFF
Non-Executive Director of SBS



Mr Anthony CLEARY
Director, Mission & Identity Directorate



Prof. Dermot NESTOR
Executive Dean, Theology and Philosophy ACU



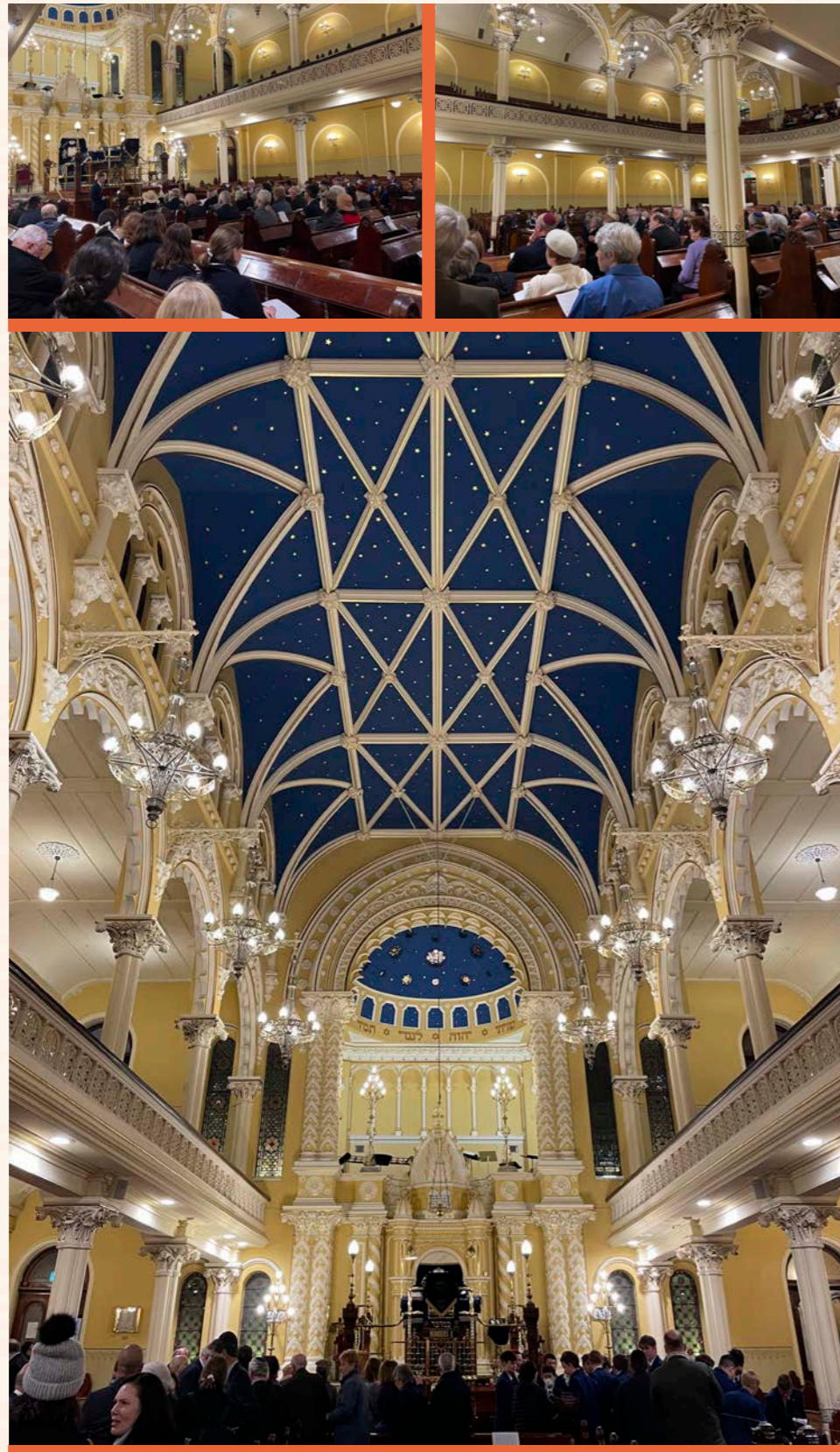
Dr Emmanuel NATHAN
Senior lecturer, School of Theology ACU



Emeritus Prof Anne CUMMINS ACU (ACEIR)

THE COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN AND JEWS NEW SOUTH WALES SHOAH MEMORIAL SERVICE

“A Christian Perspective” for all people of compassion to remember 1933 – 1945. Attended by members of the Archdiocesan Commission at the Great Synagogue, Sydney. Guest Speaker was Rev Dr Patrick McInerney and other members of faith communities and friends. Music by the Mater Chorale •



PHOTOGRAPHY: SELINA HASHAM

ARMENIAN LUNCH 28 JULY 2022

PATRIARCH RAPHAEL BEDROS XXI MINASSIN, ARMENIAN PATRIARCH OF THE SEE OF CILICIA VISITS SYDNEY



■ Left to Right

1. Reverend Father Avedis Hambardzumyan, Armenian Apostolic Church Chatswood
2. His Beatitude Patriarch Raphael Bedros XXI Minassin, Armenian Patriarch of the See of Cilicia
3. Very Rev. Don Richardson, Dean of St Marys Cathedral
4. Monsignor Parsegh Basil Sousanian, Armenian Catholic Church of Sydney
5. Sister Giovanni Farquer rsj, Director of Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations
6. Mr Vahe Boyadjian, Member Diocesan Council, Armenian Apostolic Church of Australia and New Zealand
7. Mr Steve Der Bedrossian, Sams Group Australia
8. Mr Amen Baghdasarayan, Chair Properties Group Diocese of Armenian Apostolic Church
9. His Grace Bishop Kevork Assadourian, Armenian Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Beirut
10. Reverend Nareg Mnoyan

PHOTOGRAPHY: AVETIS HAMBARDZUMYAN

NO PEACE AMONG THE NATIONS, WITHOUT PEACE AMONG THE RELIGIONS.
 NO PEACE AMONG THE RELIGIONS, WITHOUT DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE RELIGIONS.
 NO DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE RELIGIONS, WITHOUT INVESTIGATION OF THE FOUNDATION OF RELIGIONS.

Rev. Dr. Hans Kung

NOSTRA AETATE WORKING PARTY DINNER

On Tuesday, 9th August Archbishop Anthony Fisher hosted a dinner at Cathedral House for the members of the Nostra Aetate Working Party. The purpose of the gathering was for Working Party members to meet with the Archbishop personally and deliver an update on the challenges and achievements as this Christian/Jewish Education Project now approaches its third year in operation. This Committee focuses directly on bringing to visible fruition the

Catholic-Jewish commitment, signed on behalf of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, Australian Catholic Bishops' Commission, the Jewish Board of Deputies NSW and Australian Jewry. Document signed in the Great Synagogue, Sydney on the 50th Anniversary of Nostra Aetate, 28th October 2015. At this dinner Jillian Segal, current President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, met face to face for the first time with Archbishop Anthony Fisher, an encounter which no doubt will further solidify the bonds forged ever more strongly over the years, with our Jewish Brothers and Sisters in Australia and throughout the world. Jillian, along with Peter Wertheim and Vic Alhadeff, is a founding member of the Nostra Aetate Working Party. Other guests available to join us for the evening were Auxiliary Bishop Danny Meagher, Christopher Meney, Chancellor of the Archdiocese, Anthony Cleary, Director of Sydney Catholic Schools and Joseph Payne, Deputy Principal OLSH Randwick. The conversation was robust, stimulating, yet palpably relaxing. All present savoured the direct and insightful words of encouragement from the Archbishop and the various perspectives shared amongst the group regards current issues and practices of major concern amongst genuine people of all faiths and cultures •



■ Jillian Segal and Archbishop Anthony Fisher



■ Nostra Aetate Commitment signing in the Great Synagogue 28 October 2015 the foundation of our Jewish Christian educational project

ECUMENISM MEMORIAL MASS FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH II AT ST ANDREW'S ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL



■ Archbishop Anthony Fisher at St Andrews Cathedral Queens' Memorial Mass

The Most Reverend Dr Anthony Fisher OP, Catholic Archbishop of Sydney was invited to read the Bible at Queen Elizabeth II Memorial service at St Andrew's Cathedral Sydney by The Most Reverend Kanishka Raffel, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney.



■ The Archbishops at the service

ACU FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARY INTERFAITH BREAKFAST



■ Sr Giovanni Farquer speaking at Parliamentary Interfaith Breakfast

Conscious of our identity as members of the same human family, we connect together to that Creative Power within and beyond our common humanity.

Let us relish the opportunities presented to us this morning to share this food together in friendship and conviviality, to advance in mutual appreciation of one another, to respect and relish our differences as well as what we have in common, to grow in courage and nobility of character and work in harmony to expand our awareness of the complexities of the human story, its tragedies and triumphs.

Let us remember especially those in our midst and throughout the world, men, women and children, who at this moment suffer unspeakable horror, indignity, fear, hardship, degradation and abject misery. May your transcendent and healing power descend upon them and may your regenerative Spirit rescue and revitalize them.

May we reach out with renewed courage and compassion to lift the burden of those with whom we journey and to reignite in one another the spark of hope for a world where all humanity will live together in righteousness. Amen.

Sr Giovanni Farquer rsj

Sr Giovanni Farquer said the above Prayer at the Australian Catholic University's Federal Parliamentary Interfaith Breakfast held on Thursday 24 November 2022 at the National Press Club, Canberra.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



■ Archbishop Anthony Fisher & Lesli Berger

Lesli Berger recently stood down after serving four years as President of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and will be remembered with appreciation for the mutual understanding and respect that has grown between our organisations during his time. David Ossip succeeds him and the Catholic Community in the Archdiocese of Sydney look forward to working with him •



■ Rev. Dr David Claydon OAM

“To a shared and faithful witness to the world of our belief in the rights and dignity of all as beloved children of God”

Extract from joint Statement 50 years of Nostra Aetate, 28 October 2015

Sr Giovanni attended the Thanksgiving Mass for the life of the Rev. Dr David Claydon OAM held at Cathedral Church of St Andrew Sydney. The Right Rev Dr Glenn Davies, former Anglican Archbishop of Sydney presided at the Mass. Many other representatives of many faiths joined his wife and family to give thanks. David chaired the Heads of Churches Conference in Australia known as “Dealing with Diversity” •

Pope Francis

STEPS FORWARD

It is useful, in this review process, not just to look at what we have achieved, but also to use this as a guide when creating a roadmap for the year to come. While it is not possible at this early stage to outline specific steps, it is possible to discuss areas of focus, and to remind ourselves of the intended character of our work. First and foremost, the Commission will focus on taking the Nostra Aetate partnership project further. As outlined in that section, there is still concrete action to take here, and we are at a stage where we must pause, and determine what the next steps are, in cooperation with our partners. Though this will be our first order of business, we will do all in our power to ensure that the project does not lose momentum as the Commission, according to its mandate, continues to reach out together to form and inform our cultures and society. Secondly, the Commission has, in recent years, focused most particularly on the Abrahamic faiths as this is in line with our commitments. The work of interfaith and ecumenical relations moves with the seasons, but we hope to renew our energy and focus on communication with our ecumenical brothers and sisters, as well as people from more diverse faiths, perhaps by designing a series of projects, based on the round table format which was a feature of the early days of our Nostra Aetate partnership. Thirdly, again bearing in mind that we have identified education as an area of growth, the Commission would like to examine the ways in which we can build up knowledge and resources within our own diocese, within our own

communities, not least to ensure that we continue to have a team which we can draw on to further our progress. This work is not without its challenges. We have outlined many of these challenges in previous reviews. However, I believe that in the next few years we face two particular obstacles. The first is that in a world which is seeing increased conflict and disunity, it is important that we do not allow these global realities to hinder our local work which has long benefited from a unique desire to cooperate. The second challenge is to ensure that we do not slip into complacency and allow ourselves to stall at the stage of talks and meetings and statements, instead of pursuing further action and deepening engagement, even when that might involve disagreement, or difficult conversations. I am confident that we can overcome these and that we will move only onwards and upwards. It is with hope and good cheer that I extend, once more, my thanks to the Commission members, to our partners, to His Grace Archbishop Anthony, and all those who have supported our work. I look forward very much seeing what we will achieve in the new year •

Sr Giovanni Farquer rsj
 Director, Archdiocesan Commission
 for Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Relations

ALTHOUGH WE HUMAN BEINGS ARE PART OF A WHOLE, THE “UNIVERSE,” WE EXPERIENCE OURSELVES AS SOMETHING SEPARATED FROM THE REST – A KIND OF OPTICAL DELUSION OF OUR CONSCIOUSNESS. THIS DELUSION IS A PRISON FOR US, RESTRICTING US TO OUR PERSONAL DESIRES AND AFFECTION FOR A FEW PERSONS NEAREST US. OUR TASK MUST BE TO FREE OURSELVES FROM THIS PRISON BY WIDENING OUR CIRCLE OF COMPASSION TO EMBRACE ALL LIVING CREATURES AND THE WHOLE OF NATURE IN ITS BEAUTY.

Dr. Albert Einstein



CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE
OF SYDNEY



JERUSALEM
"I HAVE SET HER IN THE MIDST OF NATIONS"
Ezekiel 5:5
