



**Media Release  
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**Catholic Church well represented at Parliament of the World's Religions**

The Catholic Church in Australia was well-represented at the Parliament of the World's Religions, a five yearly event that was held in Melbourne last week.

Archbishop Denis Hart, Bishop Brian Finnigan, Bishop Christopher Prowse, Bishop Peter Elliot, Bishop Michael Putney as well as emeritus Archbishop of Washington Cardinal Theodore McCarrick were all present at different stages, and some gave presentations on a variety of topics.

Large numbers of Catholic religious and lay people from around the world also participated, including six young Australian women who had been recipients of the ACBC Office for the Participation of Women's "Young Catholic Women's Interfaith Fellowship."

Chair of the Bishops Commission for Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations, Bishop Michael Putney, attended each day and found the parliament a very positive event.

"I went with the intention of doing two things; one was to make contact with people involved in interreligious work, and I found it a wonderful place to meet, talk and develop relationships", he said.

"Secondly, I wanted to learn more about world religions. I chose the seminars I went to very carefully, and they were wonderfully educative, particularly those on Islam."

Bishop Putney also emphasised the importance of knowing one's own faith tradition when entering into dialogue, and encouraged people to listen respectfully to those of other faiths to learn about them.

The Catholic Church has been consistently working toward a greater level of understanding with those of other faiths, particularly following the 1965 declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions entitled *Nostra Aetate*. This document affirmed that goodness and holiness can be found in all of the world's major faith traditions.

"The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognise, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men."  
(*Nostra Aetate* 2)

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