

Diversity and tolerance celebrated at interfaith breakfast

AUSTRALIAN Catholic University (ACU) hosted the Parliamentary Interfaith Breakfast at Parliament House in Sydney this morning.

Almost 200 guests attended, including more than 70 faith leaders and 40 parliamentarians.

NSW Premier the Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP and Opposition Leader Mr Luke Foley MP each provided a welcome and the leaders of five different faiths delivered readings on leadership, service and community harmony, and prayed for wise deliberations and good governance.

Premier Berejiklian said we were fortunate to live in Australia –and that this type of gathering would not happen in many parts of the world. She noted our strength rested in our shared values of diversity and inclusion.

The Leader of the Opposition said faith communities were an important part of our society, allowing the community to feel valued, supported and connected.

“Religion should always be a legitimate voice as a source of values within public life and within public affairs,” Mr Foley said.

“I think of what is so often challenged today in our country and throughout the West is the embodiment in public policy of values that derive from religious teaching and religious authority. It’s that that is under constant challenge and attack.”

SBS World News presenter and journalist Ms Janice Petersen also addressed the breakfast. Ms Petersen spoke about the role of media in society and reporting of religion.

ACU's parliamentary interfaith breakfasts have become a popular event on the calendars of both parliamentarians and the leaders of faith communities.

This year, parliamentarians had the opportunity to meet with leaders from more than 20 faiths - including various Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and other communities – to celebrate shared values.

ACU Vice-Chancellor Professor Greg Craven said it was a natural extension of the university mission to bring together political and faith leaders from across the community in a spirit of harmony.

“The ACU Mission is to foster an appreciation of the sacred in life and a commitment to serving the common good.”

“The Catholic Intellectual Tradition promotes engagement with and understanding of people of different faiths. The interfaith breakfast provides an opportunity to reflect on the important role that faith plays in our everyday lives and in making sense of the world.”

The event provides an opportunity for ACU to demonstrate its mission in action and commitment to serving the common good. It is an opportunity to not only embrace and better understand our diverse faiths, but also to reflect on the important role that faith plays in our everyday lives and in ACU’s calling to serve the community.

ACU held its inaugural Parliamentary Interfaith Breakfast in Sydney in March 2014. Subsequent breakfasts were held in Canberra in 2015 and 2017 and included addresses by both the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition.

Follow us at #ACUinterfaith

Photos, speeches and readings are available on request.

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