

**Franciscans and Muslims:
Lessons from the Past and Prospects for the Future
Franciscan Federation
June 11-14, 2018
Sr. Kathleen Warren, OSF
*Day 3: Christian-Muslim Relations in the U.S. and Related Contemporary
Challenges as We Move Forward***

Good Morning Good People! May God give you peace!

Welcome to our final session. What a graced time we've had as we delved into the reality of ***Franciscans and Muslims: Lessons from the past and Prospects for the Future***. To help us explore this vital issue we have invited two guests to join us. We are very happy to welcome Dr. Mustafa Gokcek and Amina Golden-Arabaty. Please join me in welcoming them.

It hardly seems possible that since our opening session on Tuesday we have reviewed and explored over 14 centuries of Muslim-Christian interaction. The story of the remarkable encounter between Francis of Assisi and Sultan Malek al-Kamil in 1219 has grounded our exploration.

We heard again about the two men of peace – one Muslim, one Franciscan – and how each found himself in the Nile Delta encampment near Damietta in the midst of a brutal war. We discovered more about the rich spirituality that directed their lives. Our historical focus of day one filled in some significant information not only about Francis and the Sultan but also about their global, and for Francis, his ecclesial, context.

On our second day, Michael showed us with beautiful images a picture of a world in which Muslims and Christians, as well as Jews and others, worked side by side appreciating the contributions of all members of the society. Michael rather shocked us with how the stunning Muslim advances in architecture, design and artistry were generously shared with their Christian neighbors and the extent to which their many contributions enriched the Western world (another well kept secret, I might add!) He did, as his title announced: Refute the Clash!

I “Revisited the Council” as we reviewed the past 55 years of the Roman Catholic Church’s growth and development related to interreligious relations, rooted in the Second Vatican Council. Muslim initiatives in this same area, beginning with the 2007 document, A Common Word Between Us and You were presented. Yes, we considered a number of “Lessons from the Past.”

As we come to our final session, our focus changes direction to address “Prospects for the Future.” This morning we will consider “Christian-Muslim relations in the U.S. and Related Contemporary Challenges as We Move Forward.”

Introductions of our Guests: Dr. Mustafa Gokcek and Amina Golden-Arabaty

Our Process:

Michael will share his experiences and learnings about Christian-Muslim relations in the U.S. and the Challenges he sees.

Then, each of our guests will speak. We have asked that they speak about their experience of being a Muslim-American, sharing a story about both a negative and a positive experience they have had. We’ve also asked them to speak about how we might foster more positive Christian-Muslim relations in the US given the current political and social realities. We will then have five minutes of table discussion followed by an open forum.

Conclusion

A most sincere thank you to all who have participated in our conference “Franciscans and Muslims: Lessons from the Past & Prospects for the Future.” As a sign of our commitment to be the people of peace that both Francis and Sultan Malek al-Kamil were, let us offer, together, the greetings of peace: first, to our friends, Dr. Mustafa and Amina, and then to each other!

May God give you peace! Assalam Aleikum!

