



March 2015 Interfaith Center of New York E-Announcements

In this Issue:

Message from ICNY Executive Director	ICNY's "Interfaith Matters" Blog	Faith Leader Spotlight	ICNY Events	ICNY Co-Sponsored Events	Other Events	Upcoming Holidays & Observances
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Ways to Support and Promote ICNY:



Message from ICNY Executive Director

Dear Friends,

According to the recent Pew Forum's February study "[Latest Trends in Religious Restrictions and Hostilities](#)," more than three-quarters of the world's people - 77% - live in nations where religious restrictions are either high or very high. There has also been an increase in the number of countries in which Jews were harassed. According to the study, "Jews, who make up just [0.2% of the world's total population](#), were harassed either by governments or social groups in 77 countries in 2013, up from 71 in 2012 and 51 in 2007. As in previous years, the world's two largest religious groups faced harassment in the largest number of countries: Christians were harassed in 102 countries, and Muslims in 99."

Against this backdrop, we read of ISIS's targeting of Coptic Christians in Egypt and Assyrian Christians in Northern Syria. We learn also of the recent murders of three Muslims students in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Religion and violence appear too closely connected.

We know that this is not the end of the story, however. As our guest blogger and ICNY Board Member Rabbi Joseph Potasnik (Executive Vice President of the New York Board of Rabbis) writes, "The recent courageous example of Muslims in Oslo forming a human shield around the synagogue to protect Sabbath worshippers is a symbolic sign of ... collective spirit [combatting hatred]." Likewise, last week, New York religious leaders met with the Danish Ambassador to the United Nations to express their support for the victims of the recent attack on a synagogue in Copenhagen. And finally, diverse religious leaders at Princeton University met on the ethics of drones warfare (see [Dr. Sarah Sayeed's reflections](#)). Religious hatred is not the last word.

Looking ahead locally this month, we have many reasons to hope. Opportunities for youth stand out. The **Stony Point Summer Institute** is seeking Jewish, Christian and Muslim young adults to live and work together over the summer months. Also, ICNY is still accepting applications the **2015 Learning Together Interfaith Youth Fellowship Program** - a unique opportunity for New York high school students to collaborate with their diverse peers, and contribute to public discussions of religious diversity. Finally, the Riverside Church and ICNY will be showing the film *Waking in Oak Creek* about forgiveness and the Sikh community in Wisconsin.

On a final note, we wish to honor [the extraordinary life and work of ICNY Board Member Tanya Frichner](#) who passed away on February 14, 2015. A member of the Snipe Clan and citizen of the Onondaga Nation, Frichner was a global indigenous leader and President and Founder of the American Indian Law Alliance (AILA), since 1989. She was also appointed as the North American Regional Representative for a three year term from 2008-2010, to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). The Interfaith Center of New York mourns her passing deeply.

Best Wishes,



Rev. Chloe Breyer
Executive Director
The Interfaith Center of New York

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Back to Top 



Sacred Spaces for Seeking Common Ground



by **Rabbi Joseph Potasnik**
Executive Vice President, New York Board of Rabbis, and ICNY Board Member

One of the greatest challenges of any pluralistic organization is the synthesis of unity of spirit and diversity of thought. The New York Board of Rabbis is the largest interdenominational rabbinic body in the world comprised of rabbis of different denominations who see each other as members of one extended family. Jewish tradition teaches us that when we walk into a room where there is a diverse audience, we should recite a blessing which praises the Almighty for creating a world of different faces and minds which collectively enhance our society.

I recall some years ago, we received a request from the military asking for Torahs to be sent to Jewish soldiers stationed in Kuwait and Iraq. We were able to obtain four holy scrolls on loan, two for each country. When they arrived I asked my colleagues, “Which one was Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist?” Looking at them externally, they were slightly different because of the various designs on their respective covers. However, the text of all of them was exactly the same. Perhaps this was a sacred visual reminder that we all have different designations, but there comes a moment where denomination is secondary, and our determination to communicate with one another is paramount.

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Back to Top 



“Everything I Do is an Expression of My Call”

Faith Leader Spotlight on Reverend Bob Brashear



Homeless people often bed down on the steps of New York City churches at night, as their only place of refuge. But at West Park Presbyterian Church on Manhattan’s Upper West Side, they not only find a place to rest through the night, but are given the hope of getting off the streets for good. Thanks to the work of West Park Presbyterian Church’s Reverend Bob Brashear, 80 percent of the people who have slept on these steps have

found housing.

West Park Presbyterian is a massive edifice on the corner of 86st street and Amsterdam Avenue with an impressive history. Finished in 1885, it is considered one of the best examples of a Romanesque Revival style religious structure in New York City. The pastor of this church for the past 20 years, Rev. Brashear's history is just as impressive. He grew up in Pittsburgh during the time of steelmaking, attended college in Ohio in the time of the Vietnam War and graduated from Yale Divinity School. He has worked as a Chaplain at the University of Bridgeport, spent 10 years in Oklahoma as an Associate Pastor, and was the director of an Interfaith Ministry in Pittsburgh. He also teaches a class on theologies of liberation at the Newark School of Theology.

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Back to Top 



2015 Learning Together Interfaith Youth Fellowship Program



ICNY is pleased to announce the 2015 Learning Together Interfaith Youth Fellowship Program - a unique opportunity for New York high school students to collaborate with their diverse peers, and contribute to public discussions of religious diversity. We're currently accepting applications from young people of all backgrounds - religious, secular, spiritual, or anything in between - who'd like to work with us as Learning Together fellows. Fellows will meet for a series of training sessions in April, May, and June. They'll explore religious diversity issues in New York schools, and develop their writing and critical thinking skills. Each fellow will publish an original essay online, and receive a \$200 stipend for their important contributions to ICNY's work.

Applications for fellowships are due by March 15th, so don't delay! Click here for [detailed information about the program](#), and to download a [flyer to share with young people in your community](#). If you have any questions about the program, please contact Dr. Henry Goldschmidt, ICNY's Director of Education Programs, at hgoldschmidt@interfaithcenter.org.

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Back to Top 



Building an Alcohol Free Transit



Join a growing alliance of organizations throughout NYC concerned about the health and safety of young people and under-age drinking. Building an Alcohol Free Transit is dedicated to removing alcohol advertising from the subways, buses, and stations of the NYC Public Transit system. Our partner organizations include medical professionals, hospitals, public health practitioners, parents, schools, childcare providers, youth workers, community coalitions, human services providers, law firms, small businesses, settlement houses, treatment centers, recovery groups, faith communities, tenant associations, neighborhood activists, LGBT advocates, and other concerned citizens. Learn more and join the initiative at <http://www.baافت.org/>

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NGO Commission on the Status of Women Forum Consultation Day



Date: Sunday, March 8

Time: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Location: The Apollo Theatre, 253 W 125th St, New York, NY 10027

The purpose of NGO CSW Forum Consultation Day is to set the stage for the [UN Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW) meetings (9-20 March 2015) and facilitate interactions between participants. Speakers will include Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, Under Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women, The Woman of Distinction Awardee, and other international leaders for gender equality and women's empowerment. For information, contact The Rev. Chloe Breyer, ICNY's Executive Director at cbreyer@interfaithcenter.org or visit <http://www.ngocsw.org/ngo-csw-forum/ngo-consultation-day>.

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"Waking an Oak Creek" Screening & Discussion



Date: Friday, March 20

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: The Riverside Church Theatre, 490 Riverside Drive, New York N.Y. 10027

A documentary of forgiveness and faith based on the Sikh community in Oak Creek, Wisconsin that suffered a deadly hate attack. Six worshipers are killed by a white supremacist, the local community unites and finds inspiration in the Sikh tradition of forgiveness. For more information, contact Carlene Pinto at cpinto@trcnyc.org or 212-870-6854.

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Back to Top 

Other Events



National Summit on Advanced Illness Care: Driving Change through Leadership, Evidence, and Action



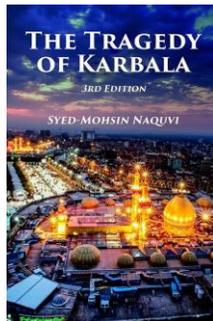
Date: Monday, March 2 - Tuesday, March 3

Location: Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20418

Patients and families want to stay out of institutions and in the community and home during advanced illness. Unfortunately the healthcare system is not designed to provide this type of care on its own. Now, communities from across the country are partnering

with healthcare systems to develop new person-centered, community-based care programs. Join the National Summit for a dialogue with leaders from these programs about their lessons learned; and leave with the partnerships and ideas you need to replicate and adapt these models for your community. C-TAC believes for true change to happen, all stakeholders must have a part in the process of care transformation. Which is why C-TAC provides Community level registration. When [registering](#) online please use the promo code: CTAC15COMM for a \$75 registration fee.

The Tragedy of Karbala - Book Tour



Date: Wednesday, March 4

Time: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Location: Think Coffee, 248 Mercer Street, New York, NY

Thoroughly researched and written in the author's signature narrative style, join as we discuss a book that explores a seminal event in Islamic history that provides crucial context surrounding geopolitics in the Muslim-majority world today. Congressman Keith Ellison (D-MN) said, "It was not until I read The Tragedy of Karbala that I understood the meaning of the phrase 'Every Day is Ashura, Every Land is Karbala.'" For more information, email info@mohsena.org or visit [the Facebook Event page](#).

Jazz Meditation



Date: Thursday, March 12 & Thursday, March 26

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: The Shinnyo Center for Meditation and Well-being, 19 West 36th Street, New York, NY 10018

Experience the Live Music and Relaxation Benefits of Jazz Meditation. The Shinnyo Center for Meditation and Well-being presents a unique meditation series that combines Shinnyo guided meditation with live jazz music performances. It will be a great night for

entertainment, new experiences and for people to relieve the everyday stress that comes with living in the big city. For more information and to sign up [click here](#) or contact Nicholas Ramsay at nicholasr@shinnycenternyc.org or call 952-261-2327.

Deeper than Dialogue: How Clergy Can Meet the Needs of Interfaith Families



Date: Thursday, March 26

Time: 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Location: Union Theological Seminary, 3041 Broadway (121 st), New York, NY 10027

With the growing number of interfaith relationships in America, it is essential for religious leaders, chaplains, and educators to consider how to engage with interfaith families. Using a Jewish-Christian lens, this groundbreaking panel will benefit persons working in religious sectors by offering practical advice from the field and inspiring fruitful discussion. For more information, click [here](#) or contact Samantha Gonzalez-Block at sg2248@utsnyc.edu.

2015 Russell Berrie Fellowship



On behalf of the Russell Berrie Foundation, IIE is pleased to announce the 2015 Russell Berrie Fellowship Program, a timely initiative at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome. Along with the establishment of an Annual Lecture Series on Interreligious Studies, the goal of the Fellowship Program is to build bridges between Christian, Jewish, and other religious traditions by providing the next generation of religious leaders with a comprehensive understanding of and dedication to interfaith issues. The deadline for applications is Friday, March 20, 2015. For more information [click here](#).

Women Rising: A Conversation on Equality from Women's Perspective



Date: Saturday, March 28

Time: 1:00 pm - 4 pm

Location: the San Damiano Hall, The Church of St. Francis of Assisi, 127 W 31st Street, New York, NY 10001

For more information, please email migrantcenter@stfrancisnyc.org or call 212- 736-8500 ext. 305.

Stony Point Center 6th Annual Summer Institute 2015

Farm the Land, Grow the Spirit: A Multifaith Peace, Justice and Earthcare Program for Young Adults



Date: Monday, June 1 - Thursday, July 23

The Stony Point Summer Institute is seeking Jewish, Christian and Muslim young adults, ages 19-29. Summer Institute students will live in a house together (separate bedrooms and bathrooms for men & women); work in our gardens, have wisdom sessions from visiting teachers about Islamic, Jewish and Christian views on nonviolence, social justice and earth care; learn and participate in social justice activism, visit various houses of worship and go on other field trips, recreational activities, and more.. For more information, [click here](#) or contact Kitty Ufford-Chase at kitty@stonypointcenter.org; or 845-786-5674, ext.121. Click here to view [flyer](#).

2015 Millennial Leaders Summer Conference



Date: Monday, July 20 - Friday, July 24 (Applications due by Friday, February 27)

Location: Union Theological Seminary of New York, 3041 Broadway, New York, NY 10027

This summer, Union Theological Seminary is excited to invite 50 millennial activists (21-35 years of age) of any faith tradition as well as no faith tradition from across the country to come to NYC for a weeklong conference from July 20th to 24th. The aim of this conference is to provide a space where young leaders invested in social activism as well as others who hope to get involved can find a place that will allow them to examine the relationship between their spirituality (however it's defined) and their social activism. Hope to provide a space that will allow young activists to create new relationships with a diverse array of other leaders, participate in spiritual reflection of their work, and learn from others engaged social justice activism. The conference covers all costs for travel, room, board, and conference tuition for selected participants. Apply today at www.utsnyc.edu/millennials.

Part-Time Half-Unit of CPE For Clergy and Religious Leaders



Date: October 2015 - June 2016

Time: 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Location: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 3080 Broadway, New York, NY 10027

This part-time CPE program for pulpit clergy and religious community leaders allows participants to delve into the unique aspects of pastoral work that arise in congregational settings and does not require participants to take on any additional pastoral work. It focuses on developing the advanced skills for meeting the pastoral needs of congregations. For more information, [click here](#) or email infocpe@jtsa.edu.

Parent Pledge Mediation



Location: Harlem Community Justice Center, 170 E 121st Street, New York, NY 10035

Parent Pledge is a free mediation service for parents who want to negotiate their child support arrangements voluntarily and out-of-court with professional assistance. Parents may choose to file their mediated child support agreements with the court for an enforceable order at any point. This program allows parents living or working in Manhattan and Brooklyn to discuss child support jointly with other interconnected co-parenting issues and to reach a solid parenting plan which covers everything of concern to them. For more information, contact Asha Sairah George, Parent Pledge Coordinator at 212-360-8753, email ageorge1@nycourts.gov, or visit <http://www.courtinnovation.org/parent-pledge-project>.

IG Releases Report on NYPD Use of Chokeholds



The New York City Department of Investigation's (DOI) Office of the Inspector General for the New York City Police Department (OIG-NYPD) released its first report: Observations on Accountability and Transparency in Ten NYPD Chokehold Cases. The analysis identifies issues related to the enforcement of NYPD's chokehold ban and the disciplinary process; reveals a tangled inter/intra agency process involving several contrasting levels of review, evaluation and authority; raises questions regarding the NYPD's consideration and adoption of CCRB recommendations for officer discipline; and highlights areas related to the use of force where a more thorough review is needed. OIG-NYPD is an independent office charged with investigating, reviewing, studying, auditing and making recommendations relating to the operations, policies, programs and practices of the NYPD. A copy of the full report with key findings and recommendations for reform can be found on the OIG-NYPD website at <http://www.nyc.gov/oignypd>.

Back to Top 

ADL Calendar of Observances



MARCH 2015

March	Full Month	NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH Honors women as significant agents of historical change.
March 2– March 20		NINETEEN-DAY FAST • Bahá'í Baha'is between 15 and 70 years of age do not eat or drink from sunrise to sunset and set aside time for prayer and meditation.
March 5		MAGHA PUJA • Buddhist Also known as <i>Sangha Day</i> , it commemorates the spontaneous assembly of 1,250 arahants, completely enlightened monks, in the historical Buddha's presence.
March 5		PURIM • Jewish The "Feast of Lots" marks the salvation of the Jews of ancient Persia from extermination.
March 6		HOLLA MOHALLA • Sikh An annual event which is a martial arts parade historically coinciding with Holi, the Hindu festival of colors. Celebrations related to Holla Mohalla may be held in various locations over several weekends preceding the actual date of the holiday.
March 6		HOLI • Hindu Also called <i>Holaka</i> or <i>Phagwa</i> , this festival celebrates spring and commemorates various events in Hindu mythology.
March 17		MAHA SHIVARATRI • Hindu Also called <i>Shiva Ratri</i> , it is the Great Festival of Shiva.
March 17		ST. PATRICK'S DAY • Christian Feast day of the patron saint of Ireland. In the U.S., a secular version is celebrated by people of all faiths through appreciation of all things Irish.
March 20		VERNAL EQUINOX The date when night and day are nearly the same length. It marks the first day of the season of spring.
March 21		INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION Call to action to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination worldwide.
March 21		NOWRÚZ • Zoroastrian A traditional ancient Iranian festival celebrating the first day of Spring and the Iranian New Year. Also celebrated as New Year's Day in Baha'i tradition (Naw-Ruz).
March 28		RAMA NAVAMI • Hindu Celebrates the birthday of Rama, king of ancient India, hero of the epic Ramayana, and seventh incarnation of Vishnu.
March 29		PALM SUNDAY • Christian Observed the Sunday before Easter/Pascha to commemorate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
March 31		CESAR CHAVEZ DAY Honors Mexican American farm worker, labor leader and activist Cesar Chavez (1927–1993) who was a nationally respected voice for social justice.

The complete ADL Calendar of Observances for 2015 is available [here](#).

Back to Top 

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Back to Top 