

Editorial



Dear Readers,

On 12th of March this year, SEDOS organized a “Spring Session” on the topic of *ISLAM and MISSION*. Due to the ongoing pandemic it was organized as an on-line Seminar, a webinar, this meant that we were not able to see and hear the Speakers live. However, it gave many more people the opportunity to join in the event, also from outside Rome, even from far away countries, such as Asia and Africa; places where the dialogue with Islam is an especially “hot” topic.

In this Bulletin we have gathered the talks of the Seminar, and printed them in the order they were given. The flow of the Seminar was prepared with the help of Fr. Markus Solo, SVD, and Fr. John Mallare, CICM, both well qualified to deal with this difficult topic. The lead idea was to have two Speakers in the morning: a Christian about mission in Islam, and a Muslim about mission in Christianity. The result was that Fr. John Mallare, who has just graduated in Arabic and Islamic Studies at PISAI, Rome, spoke about the concept of *da‘wah*, and Dr. Aan Rukmana, professor at the Paramadina University in Jakarta, Indonesia, about his experience of Christians. The first talk was very scientific, the second very friendly. These two talks were introduced by Fr. Markus Solo, SVD, who is in charge of organizing the dialogue with our Muslim Brothers and Sisters, in the Vatican structures.

The afternoon session was devoted to our missionaries working in the field. Fr. Victor Edwin, SJ, gave the opening lecture. He spoke on how he tries to encourage the dialogue with Islam through teaching and other activities in India. Since both religions experience a similar situation in India today, this helps the two to co-operate. This talk was followed by three testimonies.

Sr. Jeanne Lokalola, ICM, who lives and works among Muslims in Podor, Senegal, gave the first one. She spoke in a very lively and happy way about her work there, and had even prepared a short video of a dialogue with one of her Muslim friends. The video can be viewed on the SEDOS website.

Fr. Thomas Hendrikus, CICM, gave the second talk. Fr. Hendrikus works in Antwerp, Belgium, to help the Diocese and its Christians to dialogue with Islam. He has many contacts with Muslims in Belgium and these encounters enable him to transmit in an honest and dialogical way their faith and religious practice.

The third Speaker was from Pakistan, a Lasalle Brother, Zafar Daud, FSC. His work is the formation of catechists. One of the main aspects of this formation program is to ensure the correct understanding of Islam because the catechists are the “front-liners” in the dialogue. If the catechists can show the parishioners the importance of dialogue, peace can be maintained in a country in which the Catholic population is a real minority.

The last Speaker we had invited was White Father Diego Cucarella, M. Afr, Director of PISAI. He knows what it takes to train missionaries to become “heralds” of dialogue with Islam. Dialogue has to be paired to Christian witness. This balance is a fragile one, but when dialogue is carried out with love and wisdom, the partner in dialogue will readily forgive some “imbalances” in the encounter.

We have added one more article, concerning the obstacles that arise in dialogue with Islam, namely an online talk Fr. Christoph Roucou gave a few weeks ago at an Interreligious Dialogue event organized by the IRD Committee of the USG-UISG in Rome. The article summarizes well the different aspects that come into play when we talk about mission and Islam.