

Cork Interfaith Event – President Mary McAleese attends unity in Diversity Event in Cork, Jan 22nd 2010

Unity in Diversity' is the theme for an interfaith event planned to take place in Cork City Hall on January 22nd 2010. The event is part of the on-going implementation of the "Connecting Communities, Cork City Integration Strategy 2008 – 2011" which seeks to "positively challenge discrimination and promote an inclusive, intercultural city in which all are valued."

Implementation of the Strategy is being led by Cork City Partnership with the cooperation of many voluntary, statutory and community groups across the City. One of these, Cois Tine, an immigrant pastoral project of the Society of African Missions (SMA) is spearheading the organisation of the Interfaith Event which will be attended by **President Mary McAleese** and members of the various faith communities present in the City.

The event will celebrate the religious diversity in our community. By focusing on values common in many faiths it aims to promote a commitment to working for integration and to embracing the ideal of unity in diversity that respects the cultures and beliefs of all who live in our city. The Service will embody the themes of peace, justice, respect, unity and understanding. Representatives from several faith perspectives will participate in the celebration including Christian, Muslim and Jewish, Baha'i, Hindu and Buddhist.

The event will start at 7.30pm with a short concert of choral pieces and African drumming. This will be followed by a short Prayer Service beginning with an opening address by **President McAleese** after which she will light a candle symbolising the commitment to integration and inclusion needed to ensure that Cork's diverse population live together in harmony. The occasion will include prayers, songs and blessings delivered by faith leaders from across Cork and will be led by Ann O'Sullivan, Chief Executive of Cork City Partnership.

This is the largest interfaith event of its kind to be organised in Cork in recent times and it is hoped that it will lead to further interreligious dialogue and cooperation that will contribute to integration, understanding and inclusion in the City. The event also coincides with the 2010 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

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