



DEVIRISHI

WHEN we assert an individual's identity, we simultaneously imbue the profound diversity that's proclaimed and propagated in the belief of religion and culture, a multifaceted phenomenon that understands the purpose of life and norms to do good.

Fostering a commonality within these different norms, the Institute of Dialogue with Cultures and Religions, Loyola College, along with The Islamic Forum for the Promotion of Moderate Thought and Tamil Muslim Thinnai embarked on an Interfaith Iftar, on Friday, celebrating communal harmony in an exchange of views through a roundtable discussion.

Amid the sacred ambience of Iftar, a time-honoured tradition that marks the end of fasting at sunset, the evening also strives to dissolve barriers between individuals, paving the way for a discourse that transcends boundaries. The conversation delved into pressing issues such as extremism, self-criticism within religions, and the diminishing spaces for inter-faith exchanges.

Building bridges

Established almost a decade



ago, the forum endeavours to foster a deep sense of "Indian-ness" that binds citizens together, emphasising commonalities over trivial differences. On addressing the space, A Faizur Rehman, secretary general of the Islamic Forum for the Promotion of Moderate Thought shared, "India is a multicultural nation where people of different faiths have much in common culturally. We have a lot to change within our communities. The key aim of such discussion is to publicise these changes."

At the heart of its mission, the forum also challenges obsolete medieval interpretations intellectually to comprehend Islam in a modern and moderate way.

Empowering dialogue

With a crowd of diverse backgrounds, the discussion served as a testament to the power of

dialogue, illustrating the necessity of transforming religious identities and recognising our shared humanity.

Abdul Hadi, a literature professor, New College, on highlighting the need to have such open discussions with the youth said, "Students have deeply ingrained, rigid ideological views about religion that resist them to questioning. Despite being exposed to a plethora of diverse ideas, their religious beliefs remain dogmatic. Organising such conferences and debates at the school level can foster mutual understanding."

Carrying the universal and constitutional principles of fraternity, freedom, egalitarianism, harmony etc., IDCR was founded by Father Michael Amaladas in 2005. Rooted in the ethos of drawing inspiration from diverse faith traditions and life experiences, it aspires to cultivate a society free from conflict and anti-human forces. "Through respectful dialogue, we can identify shared values to heal divides and nurture the seeds of harmony. With the discussion, we unite ourselves in the quest to spread justice, uplift humanity, and build bridges of solidarity," said Father Maria Arul Raja, director of IDCR, Society of Jesus.



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