



World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR)

A representative body of Sikh institutions of America founded under the patronage of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib

P.O. Box 3635, Columbus, Ohio 43210, USA

Phone: 972-684-4638

E-mail: contact@worldsikhcouncil.org, Website: www.worldsikhcouncil.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 9, 2006

Member Gurdwaras:

1. Gurdwara Sahib Fremont, Fremont, CA
2. Guru Nanak Sikh Mission, Livingston, CA
3. Sikh Gurdwara of LA, North Hollywood, CA
4. Sikh Gurdwara Riverside, Riverside, CA
5. Colorado Singh Sabha, Denver, CO
6. Guru Singh Sabha of Augusta, Augusta, GA
7. Sikh Study Circle of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
8. Sikh Religious Society of Chicago, Palatine, IL
9. Sikh Society of South, New Orleans, LA
10. New England Sikh Study Circle, Boston, MA
11. Sikh Gurdwara of Michigan, Rochester Hills, MI
12. Sikh Society of Michigan, Madison Heights, MI
13. Guru Nanak Foundation of Jackson, MS
14. Sikh Gurdwara of North Carolina, Durham, NC
15. Garden State Sikh Association, Bridgewater, NJ
16. Guru Nanak Sikh Society of Delaware Valley, Sewell, NJ
17. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Glenrock, NJ
18. Sikh Sabha of New Jersey, Lawrenceville, NJ
19. Gurdwara Baba Deep Singh, Las Vegas, NV
20. Sikh Cultural Society Inc., Richmond Hills, NY
21. Sikh Cultural & Edu. Society of Western NY, Buffalo, NY
22. Sikh Religious Society of Dayton, Dayton, OH
23. Guru Nanak Found. of Greater Cleveland, Richfield, OH
24. Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Society, Bedford, OH
25. Guru Nanak Religious Soc. of Central Ohio, Columbus, OH
26. Sikh Sadh Sangat, Easton, PA
27. Philadelphia Sikh Society, Millbourne, PA
28. Tristate Sikh Cultural Society, Monroeville, PA
29. Mid South Sikh Sabha, Memphis, TN
30. Sikh Center of Gulf Coast, Houston, TX
31. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Richardson, TX
32. Sikh Gurdwara of North Texas, Garland, TX
33. Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Fairfax, VA
34. Sikh Association of Central Virginia, VA
35. Sikh Religious Society of Wisconsin, Brookfield, WI

Other Sikh Institution Members:

1. Siri Guru Granth Sahib Found., Anaheim, CA
2. Sikhs Serving America, Topeka, KS
3. Sikh Youth Federation of North America, White Plains, NY
4. Sikh Heritage Foundation, Long Island, NY
5. Sikh Educational & Religious Foundation, Dublin, OH
6. Sikh Youth Federation of USA, Toledo, OH
7. Academy of Guru Granth Studies, Arlington, TX

Contact: Manmohan Singh, Secretary General
972-684-4638, contact@worldsikhcouncil.org

Catholic-Sikh National Retreat Held in New York

(Photos suitable for publication are available upon request from interfaith@worldsikhcouncil.org)

Representatives of the World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR) and the US Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) met October 5-7, 2006 in Long Island, New York for a three-day Catholic-Sikh bilateral national interreligious retreat.

The retreat was held at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception (Huntington, NY) and the nearby Mata Sahib Kaur Gurdwara (Glen Cove, NY).

The objective of the retreat was for the Catholic and Sikh communities to further deepen the dialogue and trust among the two communities following their first consultation hosted by Religions for Peace – USA on May 20, 2006.

The Catholic delegation was headed Rev. James Massa, Executive Director of USCCB's Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs with assistance of Rev. Canon Francis Tiso, Associate Director of USCCB's Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs. The Sikh delegation was led by Dr. Manohar Singh, Chairperson of WSC-AR with assistance from Dr. Tarunjit Singh, Chair of Interfaith Committee of WSC-AR. A total of 11 invited representatives from USCCB and WSC-AR attended and participated in the discussions. Two observers of Religions for Peace – USA also attended the first day of the retreat.

Father James Massa said, “We value this developing relationship with our Sikh brothers and sisters. The retreat was an opportunity for our two communities to share our worship experiences, readings from our sacred texts, and community issues.”

Dr. Manohar Singh said, “This continuing dialogue with the Catholic community deepens our mutual respect and understanding. It has helped us to identify our commonalities and honor our differences. The kind hospitality of the Diocese of Rockville Centre’s Seminary of the Immaculate Conception is very much appreciated.”

The retreat began on Thursday, October 5 with a welcome by Monsignor James M. McDonald, Rector of the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception. Sikh introduction to “Praying with Siri Guru Granth Sahib” was presented by Dr. Manohar Singh, Chairperson of WSC-AR followed by the Catholic introduction to “Praying with the New Testament” by Monsignor Charles Fink, Spiritual Director of the Seminary. The participating Catholics and Sikhs then joined the seminarians in the Catholic Mass later that evening following which they traveled to Mata Sahib Kaur Gurdwara for Sikh worship service and langar (Sikh community meal).

On the second day, Friday, October 6, following the morning Catholic prayer of chanted psalms with seminarians, the Catholic and Sikh communities shared two sacred readings and reflections each. The Sikh readings were led by Kavneet Singh, Member of Executive Committee of WSC-AR, and Yashpal Singh, Sikh community representative of Philadelphia. The Catholic readings were shared by Rev. Canon Francis Tiso, Associate Director of USCCB’s Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs. At lunch, Bishop William Murphy of the Diocese of Rockville Centre shared his commitment to interreligious dialogue and encouraged the Catholic-Sikh dialogue to be further deepened on the basis of mutual trust. In the afternoon, the participants shared touching personal perspectives on “Why Faith is Important to Me?”. In the evening, the Catholic and Sikh delegations again visited the Mata Sahib Kaur Gurdwara for a Sikh youth led worship service and langar. Dr. Manohar Singh of WSC-AR and Rev. James Massa of USCCB addressed the Sikh congregation on the importance of the bilateral dialogue underway between the two national religious organizations.

The retreat ended on Saturday, October 7 with an exploration of “Where do we go from here?”, a discussion on “Developments in the Life of the Sikh Community and the Catholic Church” and closing Catholic and Sikhs prayers.

At the retreat, the Sikh and Catholic communities expressed shared continuing concerns over the challenges faced by immigrant communities in the US, the curtailment of religious freedom and human rights in South Asia, and the challenges of secularism to both religious communities.

The US Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) is an assembly of the Catholic Church hierarchy which works together to unify, coordinate, promote, and carry on Catholic activities in the United States; to organize and conduct religious, charitable, and social welfare work at home and abroad; to aid in education; and to care for immigrants. The bishops themselves constitute the membership of the Conference and are served by a staff of over 350 lay people, priests, deacons, and religious.

The World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR) is a representative and elected body of Sikh Gurdwaras and institutions in the United States. Its members include 42 Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) and other Sikh institutions across the nation. WSC-AR works to promote Sikh interests at the national and international level focusing on issues of advocacy, education, and well-being of humankind.

The following photos in jpeg format, suitable for publication, can be obtained by e-mailing <interfaith@worldsikhcouncil.org>:



Photo 1 Caption: Sikh and Catholic participants as well as RFP-USA observers meet at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington, NY (Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)



Photo 4 Caption: Sikh and Catholic participants as well as representatives of the local Sikh community at the Mata Sahib Kaur Gurdwara in Glen Cove, NY (Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)



Photo 2 Caption: Dr. Manohar Singh, Chairperson of WSC-AR meets with Bishop William Murphy of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. (Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)



Photo 5 Caption: (Left to right) Dr. Manohar Singh (Chairperson of WSC-AR), Monsignor Charles Fink (Spiritual Director of the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception), Rev. James Massa (Executive Director of USCCB's Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs), and Dr. Tarunjit Singh (Chair of Interfaith Committee of WSC-AR) (Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)



Photo 3 Caption: Anhad Singh, Sikh youth from Palatine Gurdwara in Chicago, shares his thoughts. (Photo courtesy of RFP-USA)



Photo 6 Caption: Dr. Anahat Kaur, Chair of Education Committee of WSC-AR, addresses the retreat participants. (Photo courtesy of RFP-USA)