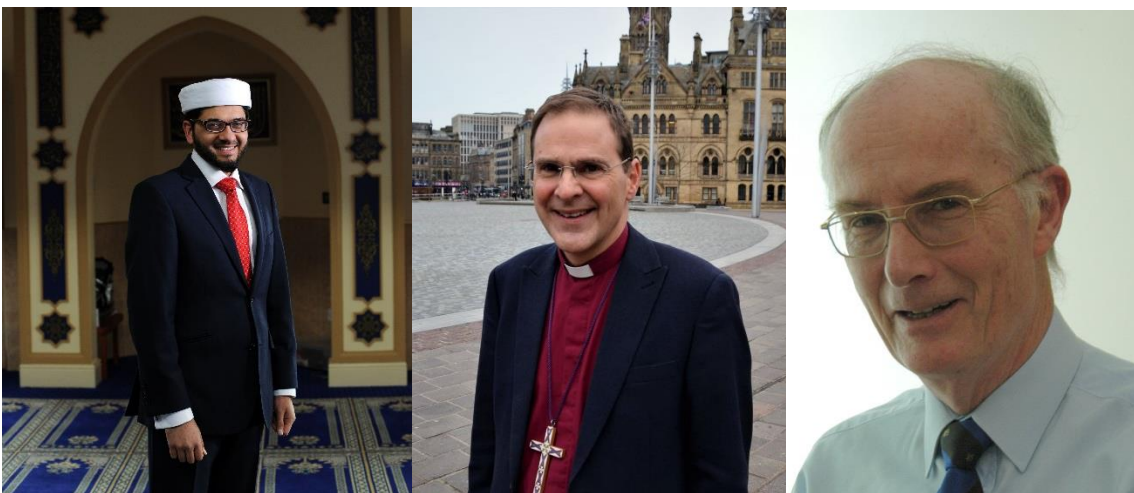


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

**BRADFORD CATHEDRAL TO HOST A
CONVERSATION BETWEEN FAITHS TO LOOK
AT HOW CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM CAN
CONTRIBUTE TO A HEALTHY SOCIETY**



Qari Asim MBE, the Rt. Revd. Toby Howarth; and Professor Michael Barnes SJ who are speaking at the Bradford Cathedral event this July.

Bradford Cathedral will be hosting 'A Conversation Between Faiths' on Monday 15th July, where Qari Asim MBE, the Rt. Revd. Toby Howarth; and Professor Michael Barnes SJ will discuss the role of faith in Bradford and how this is relevant across the United Kingdom.

Qari Asim MBE, the Head Imam at Makkah Mosque in Leeds, and Bishop Toby will discuss the way Christianity and Islam contribute to a healthy society in Bradford and West Yorkshire, and how this

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learning can be seen in the UK as a whole, with Professor Barnes taking a wider view of what faith can offer into the public square of thinking.

These individual elements will then be brought together in a conversation style between the three speakers, chaired by the Very Revd. Jerry Lepine, Dean of Bradford, who will also be introducing the event, before the floor will be opened to Q&A from the audience.

Professor Michael Barnes SJ:

“A question I am constantly asking is how my faith can be lived out and communicated in a particular context without getting swallowed up in that context. How do I “translate” my faith into this particular culture, this particular conversation, making sense of its deepest truth while at the same time safeguarding its integrity?”

The conversations will wrap up with each of the speakers looking at their hopes for the future; their visions for their respective cities; and how the different faiths can contribute to each other, and explore any issues around that.

A Conversation Between Faiths is at Bradford Cathedral on Monday 15th July from 7pm. Entry is free and places can be reserved at bradfordcathedral.eventbrite.com, or you can just turn up.

ENDS

[Notes for Editors](#)

About Qari Asim MBE

Imam Qari Asim is deputy chair of the Government’s Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group and has been a member of the Government’s Sharia Review Panel, which considered how Sharia applies to British Muslims and its correlation with British law.

Currently he is chair of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, an umbrella organisation of Sunnis and Shias, consisting of mosques and Muslim institutions. He is also a senior editor of ImamsOnline, an online platform developed to promote mainstream Islamic voices globally.

Imam Asim is passionate about fostering relations between communities and is a trustee of the Christian Muslim Forum, an executive board member of the National Council of Imams & Rabbis and one of the faith advisors to Near Neighbours.

He is a trustee of British Future, a think-tank which addresses identity, integration and migration. He is also a trustee of the charities Peace Matter and Hope not Hate, which seek to challenge and defeat the politics of hate and extremism with local communities, building resilience against the politics of hate and fear.

About the Rt Revd Toby Howarth, Bishop of Bradford

Toby Howarth was born in Kenya and went to school at Haverstock Comprehensive School in North London. He received scholarships to study at high school and Yale University in the United States, including a summer teaching Afghan refugees in northern Pakistan. On coming back to Britain, he worked as a research assistant for the Reverend Dr John Stott for two years before becoming a postman in the East End of London.

After ordination training for the Church of England in Oxford, Birmingham and Uganda, combining Christian theology with an MA in Islamic Studies at the University of Birmingham, he served in an inner city parish in Derby. Subsequent to this he moved to India with his family where they lived for five years, during which he researched Islamic preaching for a PhD from the Free University of Amsterdam.

Returning to Europe, he worked in inter-faith relations in Rotterdam before moving back to Birmingham where he taught Islamic studies and served as a Tutor and then Vice Principal at Crowther Hall in Selly Oak.

In 2004 he took up parish work again as Vicar of St Christopher's, Springfield, a church in a majority Muslim area of the city. In addition to the parish role, Toby was the Bishop of Birmingham's Adviser on Inter Faith Relations until April 2011 when he became Interreligious Affairs Secretary for the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Toby was consecrated as Bishop of Bradford in York Minster on 17 October 2014.

About Professor Michael Barnes SJ

Professor Michael Barnes SJ taught at Heythrop College in the University of London from 1981 until last year. He now teaches interreligious relations at Roehampton University and holds a post as research associate at the School of Advanced Study in the University of London.

Michael has been actively involved in both the theological and practical side of inter-faith relations. He taught Buddhism at the Pontifical Gregorian University for some years and has also been Director of Westminster Interfaith, an agency of the Diocese of Westminster dedicated to developing good relations between communities of faith in the London area. He was for some years a lecturer in Catholic Christianity at the Muslim College in Ealing. Between 2007 and 2009 he was engaged in developing Faiths Together, an innovative educational project which brought persons from different faith communities into direct contact with each other so that they could learn with and from each other.

He has been a consultant to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in Rome. He has been a member of the Roman Catholic Committee for Other Faiths and has also served as a theological consultant to the ecumenical Churches Commission on Inter-faith Relations. From 1996 to 2001 he was General Editor of *The Way* journals. He has written extensively on many aspects of the theology of religions and has just finished a study of mission and dialogue in a multicultural setting that draws on his experience of Jewish-Christian relations: *Waiting on Grace: a Theology of Dialogue*.

He was the recent recipient of the Hubert Walter Award for Reconciliation and Interfaith Cooperation from the Archbishop of Canterbury for his long and distinguished contribution in this field.

About Bradford Cathedral

Bradford Cathedral has been a place of worship in Bradford since the first millennium. It is the oldest building in the city and, alongside being a place of worship, hosts events, arts projects and much more. Bradford Cathedral celebrates its centenary in 2019.

For further information please contact:

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