

**Report on Inter-Faith Prayer Breakfast
Tuesday 5th February 2013
Gold Room, Rayburn Building
8:00 – 9:00**

Renewing our commitment, faith and hope for a just recovery in Haiti

This event was sponsored by Congressman Emmanuel Cleaver – former Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus and long term supporter of Haiti. Interfaith messages were delivered by Rev. Dr. John McCullough, President of Church World Service; Dr. Sayyid Syeed, National Director of the Islamic Society of North America; Ian Schwab, Associate Director of Advocacy at the American Jewish World Service; and Fr. Gabriel Lormeus, Haitian priest at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Massachusetts. Congressman Cleaver was unavoidably detained and could not deliver the keynote address.

The order of service balanced different faith perspectives with silence, meditation and personal prayer. Silent prayers following different traditions started the event. Christian, Jewish then Muslim reflections followed, each focused on the meaning of individual suffering, patience, compassion and social justice solidarity. Father Lormeus spoke about the role of his Massachusetts-based church in helping Haitians in Haiti through diaspora networks.

“With such a large group of different faiths and people here represented, we are confident that our prayers will go straight to heaven!”

**Dr. Sayyid Syeed
(Islamic Society of North America)**

Participants were reminded that victims of Haiti's devastating earthquake must be remembered and honored. At the same time, there is still a need for continued work, solidarity with, and support for, Haitians who continue to be affected by the earthquake. Three years on, significant humanitarian and development challenges in Haiti remain. All sectors of Haitian development are affected, notably housing, health, agriculture, and food security. Haitians, national governments, and humanitarian actors alike are discouraged by the pace of the recovery, and by the continued problems faced by Haiti's most impoverished citizens. Many actors who work on Haiti have expressed cynicism about the recovery process and its ability to meet the needs of the poor. The speakers thanked the audience for their devotion to Haiti and reminded everyone that cynicism should not obscure hope and faith. Hope, especially, must persevere in this important work. As a faith community, participants were encouraged to find the courage to keep working for a just recovery for all in Haiti, in spite of continued obstacles. Following these reflections, Haitian visitors were invited to light candles in memory of those who died.