



Interfaith unity 'crucial for

A PROMINENT church leader in Bahrain has urged people of all faiths to work together for a more peaceful world.

St Christopher's Cathedral dean, the Very Reverend Dr Richard Fermer, said the "cycle of violence in Gaza can only be broken when people become accountable to God and recognise their shared humanity".

He was speaking at his farewell ceremony at the church in Manama last night.

Father Richard delivered a welcome address, followed with a reading by Ann Bennet and a reflection read by Senior National Evangelical Church Pastor Blaine Newhouse.

Reflections were also given by Apostolic Vicar of Northern Arabia Bishop Aldo Berardi, King Hamad Global Centre (KHGC) for Peaceful Coexistence executive director Abdullah Al Mannai and trustee Ebrahim Nonoo, and British Ambassador Alastair Long, among others.

"Much of my ministry in Bahrain has been set against the backdrop, in the wider Middle East, of the appalling violence in and around Gaza," he

By JULIA CASSANO

told the GDN.

"This has led to repercussions across the region, and I have felt a strong impetus to call people of different faith together to pray and work for peace.

"Sadly, the situation in Gaza takes darker and darker turns, with unrelenting violence and the suffering of innocent civilians. This cycle of violence can only be broken by being accountable to God and others, responding as God does with forgiveness and becoming aware of our mutual belonging.

"My neighbour can't be wiped out, but must be befriended, if we are to live in peace," he said.

Reflecting on his stay of more than two years in the kingdom, Father Richard said he would never forget his time in Bahrain, "a place that truly embodies the conviviality of people of different faiths and cultures.

"Last week, we took our visiting Archbishop and Bishop to a Christian site in Samaheej, near Al Dair, where we were guided by the Bahrain Author-



■ Father Richard entering the cathedral for his leaving service

ity for Culture and Antiquities (Baca) director-general of antiquities Dr Salman Al Maha-

ri," he said, adding that they were welcomed with open arms by the local Muslim people.

"There are still people and places bearing Christian names: 'Al Dair' means 'the monas-

tery', 'Masjid Al Rahib', the 'Mosque of the Monk', pointing to a Christian heritage be-



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