

[en·coun·ter]
catholicism

Wednesday, April 15

6 to 7 p.m. | Monsignor Ben Kasteel Hall

Muhammad: His Life, Quest
and Message to Followers
Presented by Deacon Gary Simmons

6-7th century A.D.

- Byzantine Empire, the new Rome.
- Had the Persian Empire.
- Both met in the Middle East.
- In 7th century Persians invaded the Holy Land and destroyed the Christian culture.
- All Churches destroyed except Church of Christ's birth because had Maji.

Background

- Place 40K in cave and starve them.
- Byzantines respond and pushed them out and went to destroy their capital city.
- Had high taxes to fund wars.
- Arabia had more contact with Persia.
- Arabia had trade with both Constantinople and Persia.
- Arabian culture was Bedouins.

Background

- Bedouins - nomads who lived off milk of goats and sheep.
- Tribes were the basic structure of society, of family.
- Had a switch from looking at mothers to trace lineage to looking at fathers.
- Came up with different view of families.
- Towns started to be developed.

Muhammad

- Muhammad is born 570 A.D.
- Father was Abdul.
- Mother was Amina.
- Mother came from city that would later become Medina.
- Muhammad's early life had a lot of suffering, especially as a boy.
- Father died right before he was born.

Muhammad

- Mother gave him to a Bedouin wet nurse (Halema).
- Raised him until he was weaned, was brought back to Mecca when two years old.
- Mother said air there not good.
- Kept in the desert where the air is good and he can get strong until he was 5 years old.
- Bedouins speak a classic form of Arabic.

Muhammad

- Mother dies when he is 6.
- Taken to grandfather who also died.
- Was then taken in by uncle.
- When 12, uncle would take him to Syria.
- Seen by the Christian monk Bahira.
- Bahira said he had the markings of a prophet as described in the Christian books.
- Quran asserts that Jesus himself foretold of Muhammad's coming. (John 14:16)

Reputation

- Noted to be fair in disputes.
- Mecca becomes flooded.
- The Kolb is also flooded.
- Contains many icons including Mary and Jesus
- Chief arguing over moving a black stone.
- Muhammad puts down mantle they roll it, then each chief grabs and moves the rock.

Khadija

- 594 uncle introduces him to Khadija (pronounced Hadeja)
- He is 25 and she is 40 and twice widowed.
- She owns a trading company.
- He is very skillful. She recognized his talents and marries him.
- She is the dominant person.
- They have two sons and four daughters.

Spiritual Quest

- Bothered by the paganism.
- Arabia was a place with a lot of influence from the caravans.
- Had tribes of Jews in Arabia.
- Various sects of Christianity.

Christian Exposure

- Arianism
 - Jesus was a created being
- Monophysitism
 - Jesus' humanity was subsumed into his divinity
- Nestorianism
 - Upheld Jesus humanity and his divinity but with a sharp distinction between the two. (Two persons)
 - Waraqa, Khadija's cousin, was a Nestorian.

Messages

- 610 A.D. has first visit at age 40.
- Will continue for the next 23 years.
- Gets experience that there is only one God-Allah.
- He is met by the angel Gabriel.
- Would tell disciples his messages and they would record them.
- First convert was wife and then other family members. Gets up to 40.

Mecca

- Starts to preach publicly.
- Comes across a lot of opposition.
- Makes clear that there is only one God.
- That One God will demand a judgment of each person's life.
- There will be an end of the world when there is a judgment.
- Need to get ready for that judgment and quit pursuing their own personal selfish interest.

Mecca

- Mecca was a shrine town.
- Pilgrims came to worship the many gods there.
- A place of trade so the Meccans became very wealthy and individualistic.
- This clashed with the Bedouin Clan morality.
- The gods at the shrine are what made it possible for Meccans to prosper.

Mecca

- Muhammad's one God and judgment teaching causing conflict.
- 620 A.D. He is 50 and Khadija dies. He inherits her wealth.
- His uncle dies.
- He remarries a woman and is also betrothed to a girl that is 7 years old that will become his favorite wife- Umm al-Banin.

Hijra

(hisra-the flight)

- 622 A.D. - Flees Mecca goes to a Taif and is stoned there.
- Meets 12 pilgrims and converts them and they return to their town of Yathrib, later to be called Medina.
- On June 25 he flees to Medina.
- Builds a Mosque, builds army, raids caravans to Mecca.
- The Hijra is the first year of the Muslim calendar.

Medina

- The character of his revelations changes.
- Has long discourses making laws for the new community.
- Laws are formulated in dialogue and debated with the Jews of Medina.
- Has Jewish influence. Lists himself as Jewish prophet. Forbids pork. Prays several times a day facing Jerusalem.

Battles

- 624 A.D. Battle of Badr - Muslims defeat Meccans against great odds.
- 624 A.D. Jewish man insults Muslim woman.
- Muslims besiege the Jewish Qaynuqa tribe and exile them from Medina.
- Was going to kill them all but talked into banishing them.
- 625 A.D. Meccans defeat Muslims in Battle of Uhud to restore honor.

Final Years

- 630 A.D. Muhammad goes to Mecca for a pilgrimage.
- The Meccans realize they cannot defeat him. He becomes political and religious leader as well.
- 632 A.D. Death of Muhammad.
- His friend and father in law, Abu Bakr, became the first caliph.
- Takes 18,000 and defeats the Byzantine in August 636 A.D.
- Goes to Persia and conquers them and makes Bagdad their capital.

Koran or Qur'an

- Means “recital” in Arabic.
- Also called Al-Furqan –The Criterion .
- Also called Al-Mushaf Al-Shreef- The Glorious Book.
- 114 Chapters or “sura”
- Ayat or verse means sign or miracle
- Arranged not as chronologically written, but from longest to shortest. Put together this way by Umar, the second Caliph.

Koran

- Muhammad could not read.
- Never read the Bible or the Torah.
- Heard stories from Jews and Christians.
- Mishna-sayings about the Torah- how to live when there is no temple.
- in the margins of the Mishna, that collection of sayings in the margins is the Talmud.
- In other books had comments on traditions, had Midrash.

Midrash

- Stories about what is missing in the Jewish bible.
- Example: Why did Noah get drunk? Satan came to him and he buried a lamb, a lion, a monkey, and a pig. And grew grapes, too many to eat, made wine and got drunk. One glass you are as gentle as a lamb. Two glasses you become as courageous as a lion, three glasses silly like a monkey and four glasses you dirty yourself like a pig.

Abraham

- Sura 3:65-68 is interpreted as being an argument between Christians claiming Abraham was Christian and Jews saying he was a Jew. Allah tells Muhammad that he was a true believer- a Muslim. The Torah and Christianity came after him so he was the first Muslim.

Abraham

- Used to position Muslims as legitimate spiritual heirs of Judeo-Christian tradition.
- Bible-God tells him to leave and go to the promised land.
- He was making idols with his dad.
- Realized there was only one God so destroyed them.
- King is mad and wants to kill him.
- Allah tells him to go.
- This is from a Midrash. (Ishmael vs Isaac)

Hadith

- Second source of Islamic Faith.
- Virtually equal in importance to the Koran.
- Allah refers to many matters that Muhammad is familiar with but we are not, this makes the Koran unintelligible.
- Use Hadith as guide.
- Sura 33:36 forbids free interpretation of the Koran.

Nullification Theory

- Many contradictions in the Koran logically argued by non-Muslims.
- Circumvent self-contradictory verses by insisting that Allah does not have to be consistent.
- Consistency would be a limitation of his absolute freedom and power.
- Allah is Divine and can say and do whatever he likes.
- Sura 13:39.

Satanic Verses

- In Mecca, Muhammad made an exception to his monotheism. Said it was okay for three of the pagan Gods to intercede before Allah for the people.
- Satan took advantage of Muhammad's desire for reconciliation and put upon his tongue this revelation.
- Gabriel later came and scolded him, telling him he had taught something false.

Christian vs. Muslim Understanding

Christian

- Transient
- To an extent-knowable
- See in heaven
- Father
- Loves us
- Concept of service to others motivated by love and love of one's enemies.

Muslim

- Transient
- Never Know
- Never see
- Master - obey (Blasphemy)
- No relationship
- Allah loves Muslims only, hates unbelievers.

Mary

- Hadith says only two people never sinned: Mary and Jesus.
- Koran affirms the virgin birth of Jesus.
- The angel Gabriel breathed on Mary and she had Jesus.
- Islam confuses Miriam, the sister of Moses, with Mary, the mother of Jesus, since both names are Maryam in Arabic.
- Muhammad thought Jesus was Moses' nephew.

Jesus

- Called “Jesus, the Messiah” or “Jesus, son of Mary.”
- Arabic name is Isa, closer to Esau, the oldest son of Jacob.
- Messiah is used like a formal name rather than a title. He was a healer.
- Speaks as soon as he is born. Born under a palm tree.
- Is one of 25 prophets in Koran.

Jesus

- Is a slave of Allah.
- Called the “Word of Allah” or the “Spirit of God.”
- Did not die on the cross. Allah put someone else there that looked like Jesus. Judas?
- Hadith says Jesus will return to earth at the end of ages and fight for the cause of Islam, break all the crosses, kill all the pigs, abolish jizyah and destroy the Antichrist.

CCC on Muslims

- The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day (CCC 841).
- CCC says they *profess* to hold the faith of Abraham. *Professing* and *possessing* are not the same.

CCC

- Catechism does not say that Muslims adore the same merciful God, but only that, like us, “they adore the one merciful God.”

Mufti Desai

One of the primary Muslim apologists said, “You should understand that we as Muslims firmly believe that the person who doesn’t believe in Allah as he is required to is a disbeliever who should be doomed to Hell eternally. Thus, one of the primary responsibilities of the Muslim ruler is to spread Islam throughout the world, thus saving people from eternal damnation.” Thus what is meant by the passage in Tafsir Uthmani (a commentary on the Koran) is that Muslims cannot live in peace with the world. They seek to conquer through jihad.

Mufti Desai

Desai went on to explain that “if a country doesn’t allow the propagation of Islam to its inhabitants in a suitable manner or creates hindrances to this, then the Muslim ruler would be justifying [sic] in waging Jihad against this country, so that the message of Islam can reach its inhabitants, thus saving them from the Fire of Jahannum (Hell). If the Kuffaar (unbelievers) allow us to spread Islam peacefully, then we would not wage Jihad against them.”

In other words, Islam is a religion of the peace that will come when everyone is Muslim or at least subject to the Islamic state. And to establish that peace, Muslims must wage war.

Islam Groups

- Sunnis: 85% of Muslims. Sunni related to Sunna or “Tradition.” Follow doctrines and practices derived from the Sunna of the Prophet-Hadith.
- Wahhabis: Saudi Arabia, Sunni subset. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), a reformer who rid Islam of what had developed. Stressed literal reading of Koran and Hadith. Result is that Wahhabis are a violent sect.

Islam Groups

- Shi'ites: Shi'a is short for Shi'at Ali or "the party of Ali." Believe that Ali, the husband of Fatima, was the Prophet's rightful successor. Believe Imams who succeeded Ali inherited Muhammad's prophetic spirit. Believe there were 12. Last one will return as the Mahdi, Messianic figure, end of age.

Jihad

- Means “to strive hard, and to fight.”
- Original meaning was regarding the individual’s struggle against sin.
- Muslim apologists say does not mean “holy war.”
- In Islamic history and theology it means just that: holy war.
- Some fundamentalist add it as the 6th pillar of Islam.

Jihad in Koran

- Unless a Muslim takes up arms against infidels, he is not a true Muslim and has no part in the Paradise promised to Muslims.

Contradictory

- Sura 9:5: "Slay the idolaters wherever you find them."
- Sura 109:1-6: "Say, Unbelievers, I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship. You have your own religion, and I have mine."

Contradictory

- Sura 2:256 (3:20, 6:107, 16:125): “There shall be no compulsion in religion. (Meccan)
- Sura 2:193: “Fight against them until idolatry is no more and Allah’s religion reigns supreme.”
- Sura 8:39: “Make war on them until idolatry shall cease and Allah’s religion shall reign supreme.”
- According to abrogation/nullification theory, later verses void earlier one and the violent ones are later.

Jihad

- Sura 2:190-191: “Fight for the sake of Allah those that fight against you, do not attack them first. Allah does not love the aggressors. Slay them wherever you find them. Drive them out of the places from which they drove you. Idolatry is worse than carnage.

Jihad

- Sura 9:29: Fight against those who believe not in Allah... nor acknowledge the religion of truth, from among the People of the Book, until they pay the jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.