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Encounter across cultures and religions

Crusade-era meeting between St. Francis and the sultan held up as a model for dialogue today

By Joshua J. McElwee

By the time St. Francis of Assisi arrived in the summer of 1219, the bodies of thousands of Christians and Muslims ? soldiers and noncombatants alike ? were likely rotting in the fields surrounding the Egyptian port city of Damietta. The journey was certainly perilous. Tens of thousands of Christian soldiers had arrived in 1218 outside the small city on the Mediterranean to lay siege under the banner of the Fifth Crusade. Beyond the Crusaders? camp likely lay tens of thousands of Muslim soldiers who were charged with stopping the Christians? advance.

Yet, as the Crusade went on, Francis and follower Brother Illuminato went to meet with Sultan al-Kamil of Egypt, perhaps for days, and returned with at least one gift from the Muslim leader. ...



World cinema reveals multifaith experiences

By Rose Pacatte

World cinema can enable profound learning experiences for audiences about the lives of others. To the extent that these stories are about the human experience, they reveal people's faith. ...



Francis inspires ecumenical hopes

By John Allen, Jr.

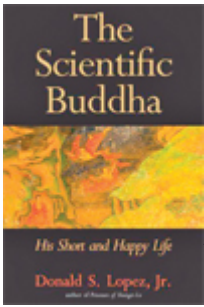
Historians say that before Francis, the last time a pope hailed from outside Europe was nearly 1,300 years ago, with Gregory III, a Syrian, in 731. As it happens, the first millennium was also the last time Christianity constituted a basically united community, before the schism between East and West in 1054 and all the other ruptures to follow. ...



Dancers connect to faith in movement

By Eloisa Perez-Lozano

Dancing is one of the ways people can connect to their faith, whatever that faith may be. ...



Are Buddhism and science incompatible?

Reviewed by Paul Knitter

Donald Lopez is on a mission. In his role as a scholar, he feels called to protect, preserve, and defend the religion that he studies. More specifically in this book, he seeks resolutely to protect and defend the old Buddha from the scientific Buddha. ...

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