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**\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\***

## **Washington National Cathedral to Display “Holy City,” an Interfaith Mural by Renowned Painter Brian Whelan**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Ahead of the fifteenth anniversary of September 11, Washington National Cathedral will display “[Holy City](#),” an interfaith mural in the North Transept of the building’s central nave by acclaimed Irish artist [Brian Whelan](#). The work is comprised of nine paintings, each depicting the three Abrahamic faiths peacefully co-existing with their houses of worship supporting and uplifting one another. When displayed together, the panels create a 9-foot by 12-foot work of art championing a vision of unity.

“The Cathedral has a rich history of featuring artwork that celebrates the glory of God and people of all faiths throughout the nation and we are proud to continue that tradition with the work of Brian Whelan,” **said the Very Rev. Randy Hollerith, dean of Washington National Cathedral.** “With his depiction of a world in which Christian churches, Islamic mosques and Jewish synagogues exist in harmony, Brian offers us a vision of true interfaith coexistence that is especially poignant ahead of the anniversary of one of the greatest American tragedies in recent memory.”

Washington National Cathedral plays a unique role in the nation’s observance of September 11. In the days following the tragedy, the National Cathedral was called on to serve as a sacred national gathering place for mourning, reflection and prayer. The Cathedral has also served as a religious convener, hosting interfaith services and even Friday Muslim prayers. Whelan’s work continues the institution’s celebration of the rich diversity of America’s religious traditions, and the work still left to do in ensuring all faiths are respected.

“Although I have been to many holy cities around the world, these paintings do not depict any holy city that exists in today’s world,” **said Whelan** of his work. “This is my aspirational vision of what a holy city looks like. Each of the canvases contain churches, mosques and synagogues, painted in bright, playful and colorful forms. An abstracted, disarming vision of cultural unity; living together in peace, acceptance and in harmony; a haven for the soul.”

Whelan will participate in an interfaith discussion during a [reception celebrating “Holy City”](#) at the National Cathedral on **Thursday, September 15 at 6:00 p.m.** Whelan will be joined by Dr. Deborah Sokolove of Wesley Theological Seminary, Dr. Ori Z. Soltes of Georgetown University and Mr. Sabir Rahman and other artists from [Jews and Muslims Making Art Together](#) (JAMmARTt) to explore the expression of faith in his art and the role of art in promoting interfaith unity.

“Holy City” is free with general admission to the Cathedral. Images of “Holy City” and its installation are available upon request. Visitors can also see “Holy City” on the afternoon of [Unity Walk 2016](#). The mural will remain on display at the Cathedral until through January 2017.

The exhibit is Whelan’s second at Washington National Cathedral. Previously, Whelan’s “The Passion of Edith Cavell” made its world premiere at Washington National Cathedral in July 2014 before making a brief tour of Europe and being installed in Great Britain. The piece honored International Red Cross nurse Edith Cavell, a humanitarian who treated British, German, Belgian, and French soldiers alike during World War I, and was executed by German firing squad.

**Media interested in covering “Holy City” at Washington National Cathedral should contact Natalie Longwell, West End Strategy Team at 202-776-7700 or via email at [Natalie@westendstrategy.com](mailto:Natalie@westendstrategy.com).**

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*Washington National Cathedral is a house of prayer for all people called to serve as a spiritual home for the nation. It seeks to be a catalyst for spiritual harmony in our nation, reconciliation among faiths, and compassion in our world. Learn more at [www.cathedral.org](http://www.cathedral.org).*