IN CLOSING

Mohamed Lachemi, President, Ryerson University

Ryerson University has built its reputation on education and research that's innovative and applied. More and more, we are putting forward practical public policy proposals — how to pave the way to welcome refugees, how to enhance diversity in public institutions, how to advance entrepreneurship, and more. With *Many Gods of Canada*, we want to enrich our national conversation on secularism and faith, enhance our remarkable social harmony, and promote understanding and mutual respect.

Charles Falzon, Dean Faculty of Communication & Design

Why are we discussing *Many Gods*?

Religion is communal, not private. Religion is a shared experience. Religion is a pathway to deal with shared questions, a shared desire to be good, shared love of beauty. Religion is a shared humanity.

Creativity is a result of that yearning. Our creativity is a manifestation of our own Godness.

As educators, do we stop talking about God? Hide our prayers? Stop reflecting on mystery? Stop absorbing the wisdom of elders from our traditions whether imparted through oral storytelling or through our scriptures? Relegate stories to being acceptable only if they are God-less? Or do we appropriate the goodness, the wisdom and the beauty that we share and learn to dance together to the tune of an exciting symphony? Do we discuss our fears, our uncertainties and our trust in the creative process?

We can build a society of despair and loneliness where goodness and humility are relegated to the private. Or we can publicly proclaim our shared yearnings and uncertainties and build an economy of love.

Pamela Sugiman, Dean of Arts

With this unique conference initiative exploring religion and secularism, we hope to advance valuable recommendations in the sphere of public policy.