

## INVOCATIONS – RCCHP’S APPROACH

In most Rotary clubs, such as ours, it is customary to open weekly meetings with an appropriate invocation, blessing or an expression of gratitude. Usually these are offered without reference to specific religious denominations or faiths. Rotary policy recognizes that throughout the world Rotarians represent many religious beliefs, ideas and creeds. The religious beliefs of each member are fully respected, and nothing in Rotary is intended to prevent any individual from being faithful to such convictions.

Our Club Board unanimously supports members delivering an appropriate invocation in their own way, while ensuring their message is inclusive and respectful of all peoples and faiths.

During our Member Check-in calls last year a major concern was raised by one member who felt they were subject to racist comments after giving a blessing in their native language and then translating the blessing into English - and as result this member does not feel comfortable in our club.

These is a very troubling issue, and one that shocked me and anyone who I talked to about it, including all of our Board members. We take this type of thing very seriously – there is no room in this Club for this type of behaviour or attitude.

The incident was discussed last year at the Board and actions were taken to address it at the time. It became apparent earlier this year when the incident was brought up again by the same Member, that the issue is not resolved in their eyes. During a recent call, I agreed to pose the following question to our Membership and take the result back to the Member. Here is the question:

*Are there any members who object to an invocation, blessing or an expression of gratitude being delivered in a foreign language and then translated into English?*

Thank you. I am hopeful that when I share this result with this member they will feel comfortable enough to return to our club and give their unique blessing again for us all to enjoy!