

OIKOUMENE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE COMMISSION FOR ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ALBANY, NY
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*OIKOUMENE IS GREEK FOR "HOUSE" "FAMILY" "PEOPLE" "NATION" "OPEN TO OR PARTICIPATING IN THE WHOLE INHABITED WORLD" AND IS THE SOURCE OF OUR WORD "ECUMENICAL," BUT HAS A BROADER SENSE. [PER ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA]

"From the Desk of the Director"

November 21, 2024

60th of Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism

Dear Clergy, Religious & Lay friends,

Enclosed please find an Ecumenical Celebration of the Word of God, which could be used during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (Jan. 18-25) or anytime during the year. This year's theme is: "Do You Believe?" There will be an ecumenical celebration at the Pastoral Center, during Church Unity Octave – Jan. 22 – 12:15, in the Chapel. The new bishop of the other Diocese of Albany, Jeremiah Williamson, will preach. The new Executive Director of the Capital Area Council of Churches (& a member of our diocesan Commission), Peter Crasto-Donnelly, will preside. Speaking of the Commission, THANK YOU to our Commission members, esp. our Chair – David Amico & Secretary, Lisa Petrocelli.

"Whilst in speaking of human things we say it is necessary to know them before we can love them. The saints, on the contrary, say in speaking of divine things that it is necessary to love them in order to know them, and that we only enter truth through charity." -Blaise Pascal

"We are constantly being astonished these days at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamed of the seeming impossible discoveries will be made in the field of non-violence."-Gandhi

Religions "are like different languages in order to arrive at God, but God is God for all. And if God is God for all, then we are all sons & daughters of God." -Pope Francis (at a Catholic Jr. College in Singapore, during his visit)
"The various religions arose from a primordial human openness to God. It will be in the sincere practice of what is good in their own religious traditions and by following the dictates of their own conscience that the members of other religions respond positively to God's invitation and receive salvation in Jesus Christ, even while they do not recognize or acknowledge him as their Savior." -Pope St. John Paul II

Pope Francis visited Istiqlal Mosque in Indonesia, the largest mosque in SE Asia, where he signed a joint declaration with Grand Imam Nasaruddun Umar, condemning religious-based violence and promoting harmony. "There, I saw that fraternity is the future, it is the answer to anti-civilization, to the diabolical plots of hatred, war, and also sectarianism." (Pope Francis)

From the obituary of Dr. Michael Lozman (r.i.p.): "In 2018, Michael was the visionary and founder of the C.D. Jewish Holocaust Memorial. During this time, Michael was fortunate to forge a special friendship with Bishop Edward Scharfenberger, who graciously donated land for the development of a memorial in the Capital District. Michael expressed that 'we have the Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish community working together on a project of such value. And that is an extraordinary moment.' Bishop S. asserted that we were 'doing God's work' Michael's legacy & vision for this project will live on."

"The Church is not properly understood as a pyramid, with a primate governing from the top, but neither is it properly understood as a federation of self-sufficient churches."—"Synodality and Primacy in the 2nd Millennium and Today" = Agreed Statement (6/24) between R.C.C. & the Orthodox Churches

“The world’s religions must unite to bring about a spiritually harmonious world of peace. It is no longer enough to simply cry for peace. We must live in peace and demonstrate it in our actions, walking toward peace with people all over the world,” -Yasuda Gyojun (10/13/24) via Grafton (Buddhist) Peace Pagoda

“However deep our disagreements may be concerning the Israel-Gaza War, the Jewish & Muslim communities share this: the war is being used as a pretext for violence by those who hate us. Our respective communities, locally & globally, are traumatized by the war for distinct yet overlapping reasons. Yet the disagreements and the trauma occur in the context of racist dog whistles and scapegoating insinuations used by activists and politicians alike, from left to right. They play on and stoke many people’s fear of the ‘other’, whether the ‘other’ is Jewish, Muslim or anyone else deemed a target of people’s grievances....Yet I know that our Capital Region community is a place where people are repelled by polarizing rhetoric and hateful actions between and against different groups of people who are just trying to live their lives. I know that our region has no tolerance for the forces of evil that might try to tear us apart...Let’s build more durable bridges between our Jewish and Muslim communities around common causes and concerns, agreeing at times to disagree, even strongly, about matters in the Middle East. Let’s find common ground about concerns we share on the common ground we call our home in the Capital Region...” May we Christians be the 3rd partner in this -jk
-Rabbi Dan Ornstein of Albany, in an op-ed piece in the Times Union – “But, First We are Neighbors” (9/29)

It is unusual for a non-Christian to be quoted in an official address by a pope, but Pope St. Paul VI, quoted Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel: “Before humanity searches for God, it is God who is in search of us.”(1/31/73)

“Gracious Father, we pray for thy holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior. Amen. –Prayer at joint ICC & All Saints Cathedrals Bible Study (11/2/24)

“Foster a Christocentric ecumenical witness. On the missionary frontier, denominational divides are counter-evangelical. Lesslie Newbigim hasa rightly pointed out that we cannot tell men & women that there is one family of God and do so credibly from a divided platform. The only principle that can mend ecumenical division is an ecumenical Christocentrism. Ecumenical proclamation of mere Christianity will have missionary power in an increasingly tribal modernity. The ecumenical challenge is now as much within churches as it is between churches.” -Very Rev. Dr. Leander Harding – Dean of All Saints Cathedral, Albany (from The Living Church –“Bring Back the Greeks” (1/29/24)

“If Christians are ever to be united, they must be united in Christ, their living head and the source of their spiritual life.” -Philip Schaf



Rev. Fr. Jim Kane
Director

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