

OIKOUMENE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE COMMISSION FOR ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ALBANY, NY

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 2 CHANUKAH (12/10-18) KWANZAA (12/26-1/1) CHRISTMAS (12/25-1/10)

*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"

Dear Clergy, Religious & Lay Friends,

Enclosed please find a copy of the Graymoor "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" Service of the Word. Though due to Covid19 we may not be able to gather with our ecumenical friends Jan. 18-25 this year (including our traditional Service at the Pastoral Center), the Service can be used anytime (E.g., 9 days between Ascension & Pentecost). The theme for this year is: "Abide in My Love... You Shall Bear Much Fruit." (John 15:1-17).

This "annual letter" provides me the opportunity to express gratitude to our Office Secretary, LISA PETROCELLI, who, like all of us, has had to work in unusual ways. Thanks also to the Commission for Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs. Eternal peace grant unto past Commission Chairman: WILLIAM TOOMEY and past member, Fr. George St. John.

In the letterhead above I dated this Chanukah, Kwanza, Christmas. An ecumenical colleague noted that from November 1st thru January 15th there are c.19 holidays observed by 7 of the world's major religions!

The late Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, international faith leader, as quoted in Bruderhof's "Plough Quarterly": "Today...dehumanization is happening to the Uighur population in China. It must be challenged by the global community in the strongest possible terms. Inspired by the courage and actions of men & women who spoke out in the past, we must reaffirm a fundamental truth: that our common humanity precedes our religious differences. Lose this and we lose ourselves and our humanity. We must not allow this to happen. We must not stand by."

Speaking of Bruderhof (3 of their communities are located within the Diocese of Albany), when a new Austrian Bruderhof opened this year Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna Christoph Schonborn (8th bishop & 3rd Cardinal in his family!) said: "It is a concrete example of the healing process, since of course the Anabaptist movement, to which the Bruderhof belongs, began here in Austria & neighboring countries 500 years ago. When Bruderhof members visit the sites of the original Anabaptist communities in Moravia, it inevitably reminds us of how the Anabaptists were driven from their homes under the Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresa."

"God, I stand beaten & battered by the countless manifestations of my own inadequacies. Yet we must live with joy...Aid me in this quest, O God. Help me find satisfaction and a deep, abiding pleasure in all that I have, in all that I do, in all that I am."

-Rabbi Nachman of Breslau (1772-1810) – great grandson of the founder of Hasidic Judaism
"When two people meet something good should happen to a third." –Lubavitcher saying



“If we came together as Christians, united as one force, regardless of our denominations or theological differences, and said, ‘Over the next 10 years we are going to end child hunger in American,’ we could do it....In this process we could completely change the image of Christianity in this country and around the world....The other advantage is that we would learn Christian unity.” The Biggest Lie in the History of Christianity (Matthew Kelly)

Quotes from “Tracking an Outbreak” – Staying Apart, but Praying Together”: New York Times

-“In Judaism, the preservation of life is of the highest priority, and that has to come before all other considerations.” -Rabbi Yosie Levine, Manhattan

“I missed the communal aspect of praying together.” -Dr. Michael Wolfe, Manhattan

-“In our (Muslim) religion, we have to keep our soul and our body healthy....We have to respect the religion and we have to respect our neighbors and keep them safe, whether they are Muslim or not.” -Sheikh Akran Kassab, Astoria

“Isolation is antithetical to our sense of purpose. The building is closed, but church is open.”

-Dr.A.R. Bernard – pastor of (Black) Christian Cultural Center, Brooklyn

Quotes from DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS – Pontifical Council document 2020:

“Catechesis...is to take care: to affirm that division is a grave wound that contradicts the Lord’s will, and that Catholics are called upon to participate actively in the ecumenical movement, above all with prayer.” (#345)

“If we concentrate on the convictions we share, and if we keep in mind the principle of the hierarchy of truths, we will be able to progress decidedly toward common expressions of proclamation, service & witness.” – Quoting Pope Francis (#346)

“It is thanks to her Jewish roots that the Church is anchored in salvation history. Jewish-Christian dialogue...can help the Church to understand better some aspects of her own life, bringing back to light the spiritual riches preserved in Judaism. The goals of dialogue will also include a firm stance against all forms of anti-Semitism and the shared commitment to peace, justice, and development of peoples.” (347)

“...the encounter with different religions has changed the way Christians live the experience of faith...” (#349)

“Special attention should be paid to the relationship with believers in Islam....avoiding superficial and harmful generalizations.” (#351)

“Prayer in Time of Transition” – as the Episcopal Diocese of Albany discerns a new bishop:

“Heavenly Father, we praise & thank you for this, your diocese of Albany. Inspire and sustain us in this time of transition. Incline our hearts to do your will, and so direct us in your ways that the leader you are raising up to be our bishop will find here joyful disciples, making disciples, united in faith, unflagging hope, and steeped in mutual charity....”

“What is meant by ecumenism? Simply this: that we listen to one another and learn from one another what it means to be a Christian today.” -Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

Fr. Jim Kane

