

OIKOUMENE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE COMMISSION FOR ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ALBANY, NY

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 2 – SEPTEMBER 1, 2022 = 1ST DAY OF THE NEW CHURCH YEAR: EASTERN CHURCHES

*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,

On July 31st I celebrated 40 years as your diocesan ecumenical/interfaith director: Deo Gratias!
Hopefully you saw my “Our Neighbors’ Faith” column in The Evangelist (6/23) on my “Top 10” of my 40’.

I’m delighted to welcome 3 new members to our diocesan Commission: Karen Bond, Sr. Linda Neil & Fr. Liam O’Dougherty. As always I am grateful to all on our Commission and our Secretary, Lisa Petrocelli.

“Throughout history, many followers of one religious tradition have found their lives transformed and enriched by what they have discovered in another tradition....Zen Buddhism, led by a Jesuit priest, seemed ‘safe’ for me to practice. His website quoted his teacher: ‘I am not trying to make you a Buddhist, but to empty you in imitation of your Lord Jesus Christ....’ Buddhism has taught me to stop looking for Jesus ‘out there’...I am Christ. I receive Christ as my food; I have been permeated by the living Jesus.” Sr. Joan Kirby, RSCJ
“What difference does it make how you pray, provided that your heart is seeking the One whom you love?”
-St. Madeleine Sophie Barat

Christian-Muslim dialogue “lets us disarm the fanaticism, both our own and that of the other.”
-Bl. Pierre Claverie of Algeria, called the “bishop of Muslims”

“It is customary to blame secular science and anti-religious philosophy for the eclipse of religion in modern society. It would be more honest to blame religion for its own defeats. Religion declined not because it was refuted, but because it became irrelevant, dull, oppressive, insipid. When faith is completely replaced by creed, worship by discipline, love by habit; when the crisis of today is ignored because of the splendor of the past; when faith becomes an heirloom rather than a living fountain; when religion speaks only in the name of authority rather than with the voice of compassion – its message becomes meaningless.” -Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, as quoted in Plough

Note: North Macedonia’s Orthodox Church is to be called the Church of Ohrid.

The All-Ukrainian Council of Churches decided recently to have a prayer service that included Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox, Muslims & Jews.

“Dear brother, let us pray for one another, that we may bear faithful witness to the Gospel message of the risen Christ and to the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation, so that all may enter into the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

-Pope Francis’ Easter greeting to Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow

“This vision of the religious leader being the stooge for the political leader is such a myopic and quite frankly false vision...” –Dr. Azza Karam (Secretary General of Religions for Peace)

President Russell M. Nelson of the Church of Jesus Christ of Later-Day Saints met with Pope Francis inside the Vatican on 3/9/19 – the first such meeting – held the day before the dedication of the 1st Mormon Temple in Rome. Pres. Nelson said: “We talked about our mutual concern for the people who suffer throughout the world and want to relieve human suffering. We talked about the importance of religious liberty, the importance of the family, our mutual concern for the youth, for the secularization of the world and the need for people to come to God and worship him, pray to Him, and have the stability that faith in Jesus Christ will bring in their lives.”

Note: Mormons work with Catholic Relief Services in over 43 countries

“In the face of what we see as the continuation of repeated attacks on places of worship and on the souls of safe worshippers in several places in this world, and based on common human & moral responsibility, we...urge all people to reject all forms of extremism, hatred, and painful practices against the spirit of faith & human dignity...the misuse of religions and beliefs as a pretext for violence, exclusion, and discrimination.”
-40 Muslim & Christian scholars & religious figures – 11/2/21- in Amman, Jordan

CONGRATULATIONS to local Dr. Michael Lozman, recently appointed a member of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America’s Heritage Abroad.

He is President of the C.D. Jewish Holocaust Memorial in Niskayuna.

Excerpts from his speech on April 28th (Holocaust Memorial Day) at the site of what will be the C.D.’s Holocaust Memorial (Rt. 7, Niskayuna, on land donated by the RCDA; Bishop Ed also spoke):

“...Today is called Yom HaShoah – a day set aside to remember those 6 million Jews that were systematically killed during a period of insanity, of intense anti-Semitism....2/3 of Jews in Ea. Europe were killed – only because they were Jews. Countless millions of other minorities were also erased from life...They had a right to life and we will not allow them to be forgotten. We will honor them and we will remember them...”

Noted: Death (6/9/22) of Dr. Rose Kriss – Jewish Chair of our diocesan Commission on Aging (1988-2010)

F.Y.I. Despite having died in opposition to the English Reformation, St. John Fisher (June 22) is also recognized by the Church of England as a saint (July 6).

Br. David Steindl-Rast. OSB has written a book: 99 Names of God (as found in the Qur’an, the Muslim holy book) 67th name: THE ONLY ONE: “A great deal of damage has been done by the misunderstanding of this name of God. All too often THE ONLY ONE has been played out against ‘all the others’. There could hardly be a more grievous misunderstanding. After all, understood correctly, the ONLY ONE includes all others one could name – there are not actually any others. Any other name could only ever mean THE ONLY ONE. Anyone calling God the ONLY ONE in this sense is committing him or herself to deepest reverence toward all religions by acknowledging that, despite their various understandings, all religions nevertheless point to the ONLY ONE....”

“As the final curtain comes down on the Interfaith Community of Schenectady, it evokes mixed emotions of sadness and joy....Officially established on November 17, 1971, the goal for IFC members was to gather monthly for a meal at various houses of worship...A dialogue program presentation followed to increase awareness of peace and harmony in our community through understanding.” -Audrey Hughes, attendee at IFC’s 1st meeting
World Peace Prayer (from IFC’s last newsletter):

LEAD ME FROM DEATH TO LIFE, FROM FALSEHOOD TO TRUTH. LEAD ME FROM DESPAIR TO HOPE, FROM FEAR TO TRUST, LEAD ME FROM HATE TO LOVE, FROM WAR TO PEACE. LET PEACE FILL OUR HEARTS, OUR WORLD, OUR UNIVERSE.

The theme for the 11th World Council of Churches Assembly, held last month in Germany was: Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.

NYS Chaplain Task Force (for police, fire & other first responders) Prayer:

Dear God, I ask for courage to face and conquer my own fears, courage to take me where others will not go. I ask for strength of mind and body to protect others, and strength of spirit to lead others. May I stay on the right path and seek to avoid evil. May I never let down those who trust me and may I show compassion for those who need me. And through it all, Dear God, be on my side. Amen.”

“...just as the Almighty created us in all diversity, so too we find in every single religious scripture the invocation that we must work in service to one another, but nowhere does it say to only serve our own. Not a single faith tradition, not a singly holy book says to serve your neighbor, but only if they look like you, talk like you, think like you...”
-Dr. Azza Karam (Secretary General of Religions for Peace)

Fr. Jim Kane

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