

December, 2008 PER Newsletter

Message from Sr. Josephine Kase, IHM

You have learned in a previous newsletter that Sister Judith Kreipe, IHM is the new Assistant Director of our Office. I take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude for the blessing and privilege of having shared with you, for many years, this holy work at the heart of the church: the fostering of Christian Unity and of interfaith relations. I move now to a focus on “spiritual ecumenism” – prayer for the unity of all believers in Christ. Be assured that you and your families will also have a special place in my prayers. May you experience God’s faithful presence as your constant companion. I know that you will continue to be supportive of Monsignor Carroll and Sister Judith as we all journey through and to the Kingdom.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – January 18-25, 2009

This year’s theme, **“That they may become one in your hand” Ezekiel 37:15-19** was prepared by a group of representatives of the Catholic Conference of Korea and the National Council of Churches of Korea. As Christians, our mission is to proclaim the message of unity in Christ nurtured by a spiritual conversion, a profound change of heart and mind that seeks fulfillment of the high priestly prayers of Christ “that they may be one, as you Father are in me, and I in you, that they may also be one in us, that the world may believe that You sent me.” John 17:21. This call to mission is put into practice each January 18-25 but also throughout the year as we join our prayers to that of Christ for the reconciliation of the People of God. Materials for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity can be ordered at www.geii.org. The following intercession will be added to the Intercessory Prayer in each parish:

“That all Christians, confident in the Lord’s mercy and compassion, will pray especially during the Week of Christian Unity, that all believers may become one in Christ, let us pray to the Lord.”

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service at Old St. Peter’s on Pine between 3rd and 4th on Wednesday January 21, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.

The Bristol Ministerium will have prayer for Christian Unity at noon on a rotating basis from January 19 - 25, 2009 in each of the churches in the Ministerium. The service will last about 30 minutes with a free lunch afterwards.

SAVE THE DATE

When: Saturday, March 28, 2009

9:00 AM- 12:30 PM

Where: St. Charles Seminary Lower Side

Large area in the basement under the First Floor

Who: Father Emmanuel Pratsinakis

Topic: St. Paul and the Pauline Year in the Orthodox Church

Father Emmanuel's Ecumenical Patriarch is Bartholomew I of Constantinople.

Bartholomew visited the Vatican in June, 2008 to open the Pauline Year with Pope Benedict XVI. He delivered his "most thoughtful address" as Pope Benedict XVI described it, to the XIIth Ordinary General Assembly of Bishops this October in the Sistine Chapel on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church. Bartholomew is the first Ecumenical Patriarch to address the Synod of over 400 Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops. The Ecumenical Patriarch in addressing the Synod said, "We regard this as a manifestation of the work of the Holy Spirit leading our churches to a closer and deeper relationship with each other, an important step towards the restoration of our full communion." On the feast of St. Andrew-the First-Called Disciple, Pope Benedict XVI delivered a message to Patriarch Bartholomew in which he said: "I give thanks to God that he has enable us to deepen the bonds of mutual love between us, supported by prayer and every more regular fraternal contact." The Pope went one to speak of growing communion and closeness, of increased commitment to attain the goal of our ecumenical journey, and a renewed commitment to the path of prayer and dialogue so that we might praise God together in a shared celebration of the Eucharist.

Russian Orthodox Alexy II of Moscow (who died 12/05/08) expressed joy at the growing perspective of the development of good relations and positive cooperation between our two churches.

Shear Yashuv Cohen, Chief Rabbi of Haifi in addressing the Synod of bishops said, "My standing before you is very meaningful. It brings with it a signal of hope and a message of love, co-existence and peace for our generation and for generations to come."

Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams attended an ecumenical celebration at Lourdes, France in September, 2008. He referred to Mary as our "spotless Mother" in a moving homily. Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Christians, called Williams' visit a "miracle". The Cardinal went on to say that "Our lady no longer divides us, but reconciles and unites us in Christ, her Son."

Activities of Staff of Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

- A Symposium at St. Joseph University on Religion, Politics and Moral Decision Making, another on The inner dynamics of Islam and Christianity
- Pa Council of Interchurch Cooperation on Faithful citizenship
- Arch Street Methodist Church on Christian presence in Israel
- St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Church on Solidarity with persecuted Christians in India
- Salford Mennonite Church on Moratorium on the Death Penalty
- Lecture at Immaculata University on Edith Stein
- Lecture at St. Charles Seminary on Orthodox Reading of St. Augustine
- Region III Diocesan Ecumenical Officers Meeting in Our Lady of the Poconos Retreat Center
- Religious Leaders Council Meetings

- Interfaith Center Meetings
- Gratz College Remembrance of Kristallnacht's 70th anniversary through their Oral History Archives
- Philadelphia Dialogue Forum 's Iftar dinner and 5th annual Friendship and dialogue dinner with Turkish Muslims
- Planning meetings with the Mayor's Office for Faith Based Initiatives for Memorial Services for Officers Chuck Cassidy and Isabel Nazario and Sergeant Patrick McDonald and Timothy Simpson.
- Workshop for year 5 Permanent Deacons at St. Charles Seminary on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs
- Welcomed Adam Kessler as new Director of Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Philadelphia
- Welcomed David Kutner as new Consul general of Israel to Philadelphia.

It is our hope to have an electronic mailing of the PER newsletter in the near future. If you are agreeable to receiving this newsletter electronically, please send your e mail address to srjkreip@adphila.org . If you prefer to receive the newsletter by snail mail, do nothing. If you wish to discontinue receiving the newsletter, please let us know.

First Seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum Rome: November 4, 5, 6, 2008

Theme:

“Love of God, Love of Neighbor”

Catholics and Muslims each had 24 scholars and 5 advisors discussing “Theological and Spiritual Foundations” and “Human Dignity and Mutual Respect”. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, PhD, recently installed President of Bryn Mawr College was one of the 24 scholars in the seminar.

The final declaration had 15 points. There is agreement with all statements except the first which follows:

For Christians the source and example of love of God and neighbor is the love of Christ for His Father, for humanity and for each person” For Muslims, love is a timeless transcendent power which guides and transforms human mutual regard.”

The remaining points of agreement are:

- Human life is a most precious gift of God to each person. It should therefore be preserved and honored in all its stages.
- Human dignity is derived from that every person is created by a loving God and has been endowed with gifts of reason and free will, and therefore enabled to love God and others. On the firm basis of these principles, the person requires the

respect of his or her original dignity and his or her human vocation. Therefore, he or she is entitled to full recognition of his or her identity and freedom by individuals, communities and governments, supported by civil legislation that assures equal rights and full citizenship.

- We affirm that god's creation of humanity has two great aspects: the male and the female human person, and we commit ourselves jointly to ensuring that human dignity and respect are extended on an equal basis to both men and women.
- Genuine love of neighbor implies respect of the person and his or her choices in matters of conscience and religion. It includes the right of individuals and communities to practice their religion in private and public.
- Religious minorities are entitled to be respected in their own religious convictions and practices. They are also entitled to their own places of worship, and their founding figures and symbols they consider sacred should not be subject to any form of mockery or ridicule.
- As Catholic and Muslim believers, we are aware of the summons and imperative to bear witness to the transcendent dimension of life, through a spirituality nourished by prayer, in a world that is becoming more and more secularized and materialistic.
- We affirm that no religion and its followers should be excluded from society. Each should be able to make its indispensable contribution to the good of society, especially in the service of the neediest.
- We recognize that God's creation in its plurality of cultures, civilizations, languages and peoples is a source of richness and should therefore never become a cause of tension and conflict.
- We are convinced that Catholics and Muslims have the duty to provide a sound education in human, civic, religious and moral values for their respective members and to promote accurate information about each other's religions.
- We profess that Catholics and Muslims are called to be instruments of love and harmony among believers, and for humanity as a whole, renouncing any oppression, aggressive violence and terrorism, especially when committed in the name of religions, and upholding the principle of justice for all.
- We call upon believers to work for an ethical financial system. We call upon the privileged to consider the plight of those afflicted most severely by the current crisis in food production and distribution. We ask all religious believers to work together to alleviate the suffering of the hungry and to eliminate its causes.
- Young people are the future of religious communities and of societies as a whole. Increasingly, they will be living in multi-cultural and multi-religious societies. It is essential that they be well formed in their own religious traditions and well informed about other cultures and religions.
- We have agreed to explore the possibility of establishing a permanent Catholic-Muslim committee to co-ordinate responses to conflicts and other emergency situations.
- We look forward to the second seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum to be convened in approximately two years in a Muslim-majority country yet to be determined.