

**OFFICE FOR ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS  
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA**



**NEWSLETTER FOR PARISH ECUMENICAL REPRESENTATIVES**

**November, 2007**

Personal relationships break down barriers and prejudices more quickly than any other means. There really can be no better vehicle for ecumenical and interreligious dialogue than getting to know another person. Theological discussion and exchange of views are necessary and vital to understand other traditions, but the best way to have an honest dialogue is to get to know your dialogue partner.

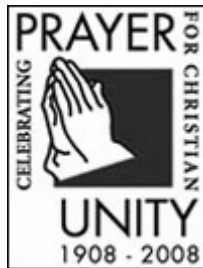
The simple friendship of a young Karol Wojtyla with a Jewish neighbor, Jerzy Kluger, profoundly affected the future Pope John Paul II throughout his life in his relationship with the Jewish people. The effects of this relationship are being recounted in an exhibit at the Kimmel Center until December 23, "A Blessing to One Another." Information on the exhibit can be found at [www.blessingexhibit.org](http://www.blessingexhibit.org). This free exhibit gives the viewer a chance to journey through the life of Pope John Paul II and experience how simple relationships can have such profound effects on people's lives.

This past July Sr. Josephine Kase and I had the opportunity to journey to Turkey with members of the Philadelphia Dialogue Forum, a group of local area Turkish Muslims who encourage dialogue with non-Muslims. While I have studied Islam as a religion, having relationships with local Muslims facilitates this knowledge in a fuller way than formal dialogue alone. The experience of being in a Muslim country and being the "non-Muslim" gives an experience that helps in a small way to realize what Muslims may feel here. We experienced warmth and hospitality, as well a non-judgmental desire to know who we are and what we believe.

One of the most essential elements of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, second only to prayer, is getting to know people. There are plenty of opportunities in local ministeriums and dialogues – I encourage you to get to know your non-Catholic neighbors and begin to develop your own relationships – and hopefully friendships. Hopefully then we can all be "a blessing to one another."

*Fr. Gregory J Fairbanks*

**100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**  
**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**  
**January 18-25, 2008**



In 1908, Father Paul Watson, an Episcopal priest, and Sister Lurana White, an Episcopal nun, initiated the Church Unity Octave, a prayer movement for the unity of the Christian church. The dates chosen for this annual eight-day observance were January 18<sup>th</sup>, then the Feast of the Chair of Peter, to January 25<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. In 1909, the Atonement Friars and Sisters, which had been founded by Father Watson and Mother Lurana, were received corporately into the Catholic Church.

After the Second Vatican Council, the movement was re-named the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Today the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity collaborates with the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches in promoting this worldwide observance. This past September the Atonement Friars in Graymoor, Garrison, NY hosted the Vatican-World Council joint working group that met to prepare the official texts for the 2008 observance. These materials are available on the Graymoor web site: [www.geii.org](http://www.geii.org) The Daily Scripture and Prayer Guide will be sent to you in January.

We invite you to participate in this special Week of Prayer in several possible ways:

- in your private personal prayer
- by encouraging use of the available prayer resources at parish liturgies and various parish functions
- by attending ecumenical prayer services in your area

**Please e-mail us** the information about any local ecumenical services (no later than December 17) so that we can print it in our next newsletter, and also make it available to the *Standard and Times*.

**Chester County Vicariate**

An introductory seminar for faith communities desiring to explore interreligious engagement was held during June and July at SS. Simon and Jude Parish. The program, **Encountering Other Faiths**, was designed and conducted by Sister Maria Hornung, MMS. It included parishioners from St. Agnes, St. Cornelius, St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Patrick, SS. Philip and James, and the host parish.

A faithful and dedicated PER from SS. Simon and Jude Parish in Westtown, Rosemarie Harootunian, entered eternal life on October 3, 2007. Rosemarie and her husband Ed were active members of the Religious Council of Greater West Chester, as well as regular attendees at our archdiocesan ecumenical and interfaith activities. We commend her to your prayers.

**Bucks County Vicariate**

Lower Bucks Center for Church and Community

Among the several new members of the LBCCC Board are Emily DiBala of St. Andrew Church in Newtown and Richard Nabasny of St. Ignatius Church in Yardley.

LBCCC's ministry to immigrants and refugees, *Welcoming the Stranger*, resumed on September 10 with thirteen free classes in English, computers, and preparation for citizenship. The classes are held in six locations in the Lower Bucks area. Since its inception, WTS has taught a total of 1450 students from 80 countries.

An International Day of Peace Interfaith Service was held on September 20 in St. John the Evangelist Parish Center in Lower Makefield. The service included representatives of the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Baha'i traditions. Children from many congregations formed a combined children's choir directed by Lynn Martz from Holy Trinity Church in Morrisville.

**Delaware County Vicariate**

New PER's were welcomed at a regional meeting for Parish Ecumenical Representatives of Delaware County which took place on Thursday, October 25, 2007 at 7:15 PM at the Saint Andrew Parish Upper School Hall in Drexel Hill.

**Montgomery County Vicariate**

A regional meeting for all Parish Ecumenical Representatives in Montgomery County Vicariate is scheduled for Thursday, November 19 at Mary Mother of the Redeemer Parish.

We acknowledge with gratitude the life and commitment of Loretta Daly who served for many years as PER for Epiphany of Our Lord Parish in Plymouth Meeting. Loretta was a familiar face at our meetings and workshops. She entered eternal life on July 27, 2007, and we commend her to your prayers.

Plymouth/Whitemarsh Ministerium

This local group of 13 churches and synagogues will hold its annual Thanksgiving Service on Wednesday, November 21 at 7:30 PM. The service will be hosted by Epiphany of Our Lord Parish in Plymouth Meeting in honor of their jubilee year.

**Philadelphia North Vicariate**

A meeting for the PER's from Philadelphia North Vicariate took place on Saturday, October 27 at 10:00 AM in St. Matthew Rectory.

**Interfaith Thanksgiving Services**

- Bustleton Ministerium – Tuesday, November 20, 7:00 PM  
St. Mark Reformed Church, 525 Welsh Road
- Tacony Ministerium – Wednesday, November 21, 7:30 PM  
Holy Innocents/St. Paul Episcopal Church, 7001 Torresdale
- Mayfair-Holmesburg Ministerium – Wednesday, November 21, 7:30 PM  
Holmesburg Baptist Church

**Philadelphia South Vicariate**

Old St. Joseph's Parish will be celebrating its 275<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an interreligious service on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 2:00 PM. The service will be held at the Quaker Arch Street Meeting House to celebrate religious freedom.

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**Recent Ecumenical Dialogues**

The tenth meeting of the Joint International Commission for **Orthodox-Roman Catholic** Theological Dialogue took place October 8-14 in Ravenna, Italy. The commission has been working on the theme of "The Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church: Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority in the Church." An agreed common document was approved. The theme for the next plenary session will be: "The role of the Bishop of Rome in the communion of the Church in the first millennium."

**Anglican and Roman Catholic** leaders in the United States met October 18-20 in Alexandria, Virginia in dialogue on the role of the Virgin Mary and the progress in ecumenical relations between the two church bodies. This was the sixty-third meeting of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation (ARCUSA) which was established in 1965. The meeting completed work on two documents. The first was a response to the 2004 document issued by the International Anglican-Roman Commission, entitled "Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ." The second was the drafting of a Spanish-language pastoral tool to be used to clarify the distinctions between the two churches and illustrate progress made in their ecumenical relations in recent decades.

Mennonite delegates from ten countries around the world were in Rome October 18-25 for continuing consultations on **Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue** and peace. This meeting was a follow-up to the first international dialogue which took place from 1998-2003 and produced a 48-page report, "Called Together to be Peacemakers."

**COMING EVENTS**

**A Blessing to One Another: Pope John Paul II and the Jewish People**

A multimedia exhibit that celebrates the value of interfaith dialogue and understanding, sponsored by St. Joseph's University

Place: The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts  
Dates: October 18 to December 23, 2007  
Open 7 days a week (except November 22 and December 6)  
Time: 12:00 noon to 8:00 PM  
Admission: Free

The 2,500 square-foot exhibit includes a unique collection of photos, videos, documents and artifacts that record the life of John Paul II and his contribution to improving Jewish-Catholic relations during his papacy.

To learn more about the exhibit, please visit [www.blessingexhibit.org](http://www.blessingexhibit.org).

**An ecumenical Tribute to Veterans and Their Families**

Date: Sunday, November 11, 2007  
Time: 2:00 to 4:00 PM  
Place: Philadelphia Cathedral (Episcopal), 38<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut Streets  
All are invited to attend.

**Interfaith Thanksgiving Service**

Sponsored by the Interfaith Center of Greater Philadelphia  
Date: Sunday, November 18, 2007  
Time: 5:00 PM  
Place: Philadelphia Cathedral (Episcopal), 38<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut Streets

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**SAVE THE DATE!**

Annual Workshop for Parish Ecumenical Representatives  
March 1, 2008, 9:00AM – 12:30 PM  
St. Charles Borromeo Seminary  
Vianney Auditorium

Further details in the January newsletter

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Excerpts from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue  
**Message for the End of Ramadan**

**Christians and Muslims:  
Called to promote a culture of peace**

3. *As religious believers, it's up to us all to be educators of peace, of human rights, to a freedom which respects each person, but also to ensure increasingly strong social bonds, because man must take care of his human brothers and sisters without discrimination. . . . Together, as members of different religious traditions, we are called to spread a teaching which honours all human creatures a message of love between individuals and peoples. We are particularly responsible for ensuring that our young people, who will be in charge of tomorrow's world, are formed in this spirit. It is above all the responsibilities of families and then of those involved in the educational world, and of civic and religious authorities, all of whom have a duty to pay attention to the spread of a just teaching. . . .*
4. *In this spirit, the pursuit and intensification of dialogue between Christians and Muslims must be considered important, in both educational and cultural dimensions. Thus all forces can be mobilized in the service of mankind and humanity so that the younger generations do not become cultural or religious blocs opposed to one another, but genuine brothers and sisters in humanity. Dialogue is the tool which can help us to escape from the endless spiral of conflict and multiple tensions which mark our societies, so that all peoples can live in serenity and peace and with mutual respect and harmony among their component groups. . . .*
5. *This is the ardent hope I share with you: that Christians and Muslims continue to develop increasingly friendly and constructive relationships in order to share their specific riches, and that they will pay particular attention to the quality of the witness of their believers.*

Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran, President

**Letter of Muslim Scholars to Christian Leaders**

“A Common Word between Us and You” is the title of a letter sent by 138 Muslim leaders and scholars, on October 11, 2007 to Pope Benedict XVI, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and more than 20 other Christian leaders. Cardinal Tauran noted that the text, which was signed by both Sunni and Shiite Muslims, demonstrated that “with good will and respectful dialogue, we can rise above prejudices.”

Some excerpts from the text of the letter:

*Love of the neighbor is an essential and integral part of faith in God and love of God because in Islam without love of the neighbor there is no true faith in God and no righteousness. . . . However, empathy and sympathy for the neighbor – and even formal prayers – are not enough. They must be accompanied by generosity and self-sacrifice. . . . If Muslims and Christians are not at peace, the world cannot be at peace. With the terrible weaponry of the modern world, with Muslims and Christians intertwined everywhere as never before, no side can unilaterally win a conflict between more than half of the world's inhabitants. Thus our common future is at stake. The very survival of the world itself is perhaps at stake.*

*So let our differences not cause hatred and strife between us. Let us vie with each other only in righteousness and good works. Let us respect each other, be fair, just and kind to another and live in sincere peace, harmony and mutual goodwill.*

### **Sikh-Catholic Retreat Discusses Spirituality, Holiness, Saints**

Representatives of the World Sikh Council- America Region met with members of the USCCB Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs on September 28-30 for a three-day bilateral retreat. The purpose was to explore concepts of holiness and the spiritual path in the two communities. Sikhs and Catholics stress the common origin of humanity from God, from which flows their respective teachings on the kinship of all peoples. Both hold that the path to holiness includes both inner conversion and outward manifestations of love for one's neighbor. Participants reflected on the lives of those recognized by their communities as holy people. They also shared their personal narratives of seeking holiness. Three of the ten members of the Sikh delegation were from the Philadelphia area.

### **First Lay Conference on Catholic-Jewish Relations at the Vatican**

Meeting at the North American College in the Vatican, 75 conference participants listened to experts in Catholic-Jewish dialogue, Vatican officials and each other. The October conference in Rome was sponsored by the New York-based Interreligious Information Center, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. On October 22 the conference heard from Jerzy Kluger, the man who gained fame as Pope John Paul II's childhood Jewish friend. Other notable speakers included Cardinal William Keeler, a long time veteran of Catholic Jewish Dialogue; Cardinal Walter Kasper, Bishop Brian Farrell and Father Norbert Hoffman of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. Included in the gathering were several university students who were blogging about their experience while on the conference for their classmates at home. Along with the sharing of much information, the conference was designed for congregational leaders to take home the experience to their local communities, so to continue to build on the good relations that have been fostered since Vatican II. Father Fairbanks participated in the conference.

## Activities of Office Staff

September 16 - Father Fairbanks made a presentation on the meaning and purpose of dialogue at the fourth annual Iftar dinner sponsored by the Philadelphia Dialogue Forum, a project of local Turkish Muslims. During the month of Ramadan, the evening meal which breaks the fast is called an Iftar dinner.

September 18 – Sister Josephine Kase gave a presentation on “Interfaith Dialogue: What is happening with dialogue among Christians, Muslims and Jews” to residents of Ann’s Choice, a retirement community in Warminster.

September 24 - Sister Josephine Kase attended a meeting of the Allentown Diocesan Ecumenical Commission and PERS to share with them our Philadelphia experience in ecumenical and interreligious affairs.

October 12-14 – Sister Josephine Kase participated in the annual Evangelical-Catholic Dialogue sponsored by the USCCB at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN.

October 16-18 – Sister Josephine Kase chaired the annual meeting of the Faiths in the World Committee in Chicago. This committee serves as a resource for diocesan ecumenical staff persons in matters relating to non-Christian religions.

October 21-25 – Father Fairbanks attended a Conference on Catholic-Jewish Relations at the Vatican. Catholics and Jews from twenty-five U.S. cities, representing their local Churches and Synagogues, met with high-ranking Church Officials at the Vatican to create a greater understanding of issues between the two faiths.

October 24-25 – Sister Josephine Kase attended a meeting of the Region III (PA and NJ) members of the Catholic Association of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers which was held at Mary Immaculate Center in Northampton.

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## **VISIT OUR WEB SITE**

<http://www.archphila.org/evangelization/ecum/ecum.htm>

*or*

<http://www.archphila.org/>

► Archdiocese, then ► Evangelization, then ► Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

**Please e-mail us your name, what parish you represent, and your e-mail address to:**  
[ecumen@adphila.org](mailto:ecumen@adphila.org)

**Deadline for next newsletter: December 17, 2007**