

ANNUAL REPORT

Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

DIOCESE OF
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

2016

This report is being presented as the Annual Report on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego covering the period from September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016. It is available on the diocesan website, www.sdcatholic.org, under "Ministries," "Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs."

ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC

ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUES OF SAN DIEGO continue to meet successfully. The Annual Day of Dialogue continues to bring member of the Episcopal and Roman Catholic Dioceses together to discuss topics of interest to both communities hoping to foster a greater awareness of what unites us. We usually have an attendance of approximately 60 – 70 people. This year, in light of the coming year of commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we have asked the Lutheran Community of San Diego to partner with us and they agreed. We now have formed a Lutheran/Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogue (L/A/RC) of San Diego and will be working on two major events to mark the commemoration. The January Day of Dialogue will feature three speakers - Episcopalian, Lutheran, Roman Catholic – giving insights into the Reformation and how it affects the Church today. In October, 2017, there will be an ecumenical service of Remembrance at the Church of the Immaculata, on the campus of USD.

CATHOLIC/ORTHODOX DIALOGUE

The Society of St. John Chrysostom, Western Region, has formally established itself with bylaws and a California 501.C.3 for tax exempt status. The SSJCWR meets monthly; a business meeting one month followed by an open meeting with invited speakers to give presentations on topics of interest to both communities. Attendance is usually very small but SSJC/WR is committed to working together for growth in understanding. SSJC/WR also publishes a quarterly newsletter which is sent to most Catholic and Orthodox churches for distribution to parishioners.

CATHOLIC/JEWISH DIALOGUE

Msgr. Mikulanis also participates in the Annual Adult lecture series at Congregation Beth Israel, along with Rabbi Michael Berk, Imam Taha Hassane and one of the clergy of First United Methodist Church of San Diego. The four present a panel discussion, open to questions and answers from the audience, on topics pertinent to each group and the events of the time. The diocese is also represented at the ADL annual Immigrant Seder which takes place close to the beginning of Passover.

The Diocese continues to work well with the Anti-Defamation League, San Diego Regional Office, to promote Christian/Jewish understanding. Indeed, the Leadership of the ADL and the Diocese have formed a good friendship.

CATHOLIC/MUSLIM DIALOGUE

The world situation deems Catholic/Muslim Dialogue more important than ever. The difficulty in San Diego has been getting the Muslims to engage in such dialogue. Imam Taha Hassane of the Islamic Center of San Diego is a key partner in dialogue. Lunch meetings, classroom presentations and adult information events in parishes throughout the diocese help to bring a better understanding of both communities of one another. It is a struggle, though, in today's world of ISIS inspired terrorism, to convince Christians that Islam, especially our local community, can be a partner for peace and world development.

The Diocese of San Diego continues to be an active participant in the West Coast Catholic/Muslim Dialogue, sponsored by the BCEIA of the USCCB.

INTERRELIGIOUS COUNCIL OF SAN DIEGO

Once again, the IRC doesn't seem to be responding to the needs of the community. No information has been received from them of activities or projects. This organization is moribund at best.

SAN DIEGO REGIONAL INTERFAITH COLLABORATIVE

SDRIC was formed recently to provide an umbrella organization where every religious organization in San Diego County can find a place to advertise their activities and come together to discuss issues of importance to them. Although SDRIC is not constituted as a program oriented organization, it has held two very successful gatherings with more than 100 participants from many, varied religions in San Diego. These gatherings have produced smaller working groups composed of various religious bodies to address the needs of their communities. SDRIC is still in its development stage.

INTERFAITH SHELTER NETWORK

The ISN continues to be an outstanding model of Interfaith cooperation in meeting an immediate need. Thousands of people are housed and cared for by the religious community during the winter months. The ISN also coordinates *El Nido*, an apartment complex for battered women and their children.

OTHER

The Diocesan website continues to have a webpage for ecumenism. It can be found at www.sdatholic.org. Click "Ministries" Click "Ecumenism"

The Diocesan Institute continues to offer a 15 hour course on basic ecumenism, taught by Msgr. Mikulanis. Though not a lot of people take this course, those who do find it to

be very helpful. It is a required course for those candidates in the Diocesan Permanent Deacon Program. The course is scheduled again for the Fall Term, 2016.

Letters to the pastors are sent each year encouraging their participation in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, with order forms for the Graymoor materials. Hanukkah, Passover, New Year cards are sent to the rabbis and Eid Al-Ftir greetings are sent to the Imams. Easter Greetings are sent to the Orthodox priests.

The local ministerial associations and ecumenical agencies continue to meet and bring people together.

Again, the Diocese was represented at the National Workshop on Christian Unity which was held this year in Louisville, KY.

All in all, although ecumenism and interreligious work is not a screaming issue in the minds of most people these days, clergy and laity included, the ecumenical/interreligious climate in San Diego is healthy and productive, something of which the Diocese can be truly proud! This could never happen were it not for the solid support and backing of the Bishop. For this, we are extremely grateful.

While there are difficulties along the way which, at times, can be discouraging, the Church cannot lose hope in the power of the Holy Spirit to find ways to surmount the obstacles we find before us.

To be sure, Ephesians 4:1-6 must be our motivation to make the prayer of Jesus a reality that "... all may be one" (Jn 17:21).

Rev. Msgr. Dennis L. Mikulanis, S.T.D.
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