

**Anti-Racism Commission
Report to the 225th Annual Diocesan Convention**

**Our Twenty-Year Vision for the Diocese of New Jersey
(Adopted by Diocesan Council, September 2001)**

The Diocese of New Jersey is recognized as a part of the Body of Christ because its congregations joyfully celebrate their anti-racist, multicultural embodiment of Christ's love.

The Diocese provides intentional leadership in dismantling racism in the wider community by modeling the sharing of power and mutual respect, among all people, at all levels of diocesan life. Its mission, structures, policies, and practices are used to perpetuate an anti-racist identity.

The Diocese's anti-racist way of living together through its values of justice and equality is seen as a model for change and a sign of hope.

The Anti-Racism Commission continues to be guided by this vision in all its organizing efforts against racism for the diocese. In 2008, the Anti-Racism Commission oversaw development and activities of the Anti-Racism Team (ART) and organized anti-racism training events, introductory parish and search committee training within the diocese. The commission offered anti-racism training to all diocesan executive staff, as well as officials elected to diocesan council, standing committee, finance and budget committee, and other entities; the commission also organized anti-racism training which is required for clergy candidates in deacon school. To date, the Commission has provided a 90-minute workshop to 34 parishes and search committees.

The Anti-Racism Commission underwent a number of personnel changes during 2008, losing four commission members. We welcomed new member replacements and one long-term member returning to the diocese and commission during the last quarter of the year. In the fall of 2008, following a team and commission retreat, we began a process of team restructuring, with the objective of better using the skills and abilities of team members and our resources.

We adopted and publicized a policy strongly urging that parish search committees be scheduled for the Introductory Anti-Racism Training as soon as possible after they have been established. It is also urged that the parish vestries join those trainings. We were able to provide training to three search committees, and one parish, though we were hampered by a lack of qualified trainers for most of the year. There were other search committees to whom we were not able to provide training to due to circumstances in their search process that led to cancellation or postponement of training. We are aggressively addressing the issue of having a fully qualified cadre of multiple training teams ready for assignments in the later half of 2009.

During 2008, we sponsored three multi-day workshops to train current and new team members and members of Hispanic congregations in An Introduction to Anti-Racism Analysis and Advanced Anti-Racism Training. These trainings help identify candidates to serve as parish trainers, who will get more in-depth experience in training platform skills and subject matter content. Their preparation also involves observing and assisting in actual search or parish training sessions.

We discussed with Bishop Cancell the concept of having core trainers, a full time set of 2-3 people who would work for the diocese to provide the same kind of training we now contract for from Crossroads. Subsequently, the Commission formed a task force to look into grants and support from foundations for the purpose of training and employing core trainers.

We also discussed issues concerning support for Black clergy serving predominantly white parishes. We suggested the diocesan deployment office should organize a seminar for Black clergy with their parish vestries. The deployment office should facilitate special training to bring out issues, initiate a support system, and then follow-up with vestries that call clergy who are not white. These offerings would be supplemental to the anti-racism training parish search committees receive during their discernment and search process.

During a Meeting with Bishop Romero commission members introduced three topics: history and an overview of the work of the commission; relationship between Black and Latino clergy; and how ARC can work with Bishop Romero to accomplish his agenda. During the meeting suggestions were made to aid a stronger working relationship between the Anti-Racism Commission and the Hispanic Commission and to further an agenda of cross-cultural understanding throughout the diocese. Bishop Romero also encouraged our mutual support of the Cross Cultural Clergy Conference in October 2008 and participation in the newly formed Cross-Cultural Committee he chairs. We agreed with his suggestions.

We sponsored a presentation at Diocesan House, of the documentary video "Dominican Identity and Migrations to Hispaniola". Professor Nestor Montilla and his assistant, who researched and produced the documentary, led the presentation discussion. About 50 people attended this session.

We pray for your personal commitment to ending the sin of racism in our diocese. We appreciate and value your ongoing support as we work toward fulfilling the 20-Year Anti-Racism Vision for the Diocese of New Jersey.

Faithfully,

The Anti-Racism Commission of the Diocese of New Jersey
2008