

Anti-Racism Commission Report to the 222nd Diocesan Convention

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The Anti-Racism Commission (ARC) and Anti-Racism Team (ART) experienced a very busy and eventful 2005. A long-standing member of both groups, Margy Hughes, resigned after many faithful years of service, dedication and significant contribution to the work of the Commission and Team. There were also several membership changes within the Team, with losses and the addition of new members. In spite of these personnel changes, the work of the Commission and Team progressed in several areas to aid in moving the diocese closer to the realization of its 20-year vision, adopted by Diocesan Council in September 2001, and presented below.

Our Twenty-Year Vision for the Diocese of New Jersey

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.

Our principal thrust continues to be awareness training. The **Ending Racism in the 21st Century** workshop is a 90-minute session that was presented in five parishes, to the Diocesan Finance Committee, and several search committees during 2005. When we work with search committees, we place a great deal of emphasis on the 20-Year Vision since the calling of a new parish priest offers many opportunities to purposefully join the ranks of other parishes in the Diocese that are in the forefront of change, consistent with the principles of the Vision.

Representatives of the Anti-Racism Commission were invited to meet with representatives of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, as they begin their journey to become an anti-racist diocese. Information about our beginnings, Crossroads Ministries and our progress was provided.

Beginning in late 2001 through the end of 2005, training has been provided to 600 parishioners and clergy. These workshops have been presented to 18 parishes and another 10 parishes/search committees have indicated their need for a workshop in 2006. We also presented a workshop designed by ART members, "What is Systemic Racism?" during the Equipping NJ workshop series held in April 2005, at the Cathedral.

In 2005, there were 52 parishioners and clergy who attended two of our 2.5 day, ARC sponsored Crossroads Ministries workshops – **Understanding and Analyzing Systemic Racism**. Thirteen attended an additional all day workshop – **Team Development and Deepening the Analysis**, to complete the required 3.5 days of training to function as team members. These two workshops advanced the development of new ART members and will prepare those who choose to become trainers. Currently there are 9 members of ART who serve as workshop presenters.

A major milestone for the Commission and Team was the production of its first diocesan-wide conference on racism, **No More In My Church**, on November 19, at the Cathedral. The conference attracted a very diverse audience of close to 200 people from all over the diocese. There were 51 parishes represented. The keynote speaker was Dr. Victor M. Rodriguez, Chairman, Department of Chicano and Latino Studies, California State University, Long Beach, California.

An art exhibit featured original works by Ruth Cuncell and Corrine Peters. Their collaboration was based on a Wall of History of Racism and Anti-Racism, created by the Diocesan Anti-Racism Team as part of its early training and development. The photo exhibit was the creation of William Perry and was sponsored by the New

Jersey chapter of Episcopal Church and Visual Arts. Corrine Peters' work is presently on exhibit in the nave of St. David, Cranbury.

The combination of multicultural liturgy, music, food, audience, a thought provoking presentation and discussion all contributed to an outstanding day. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest rating, conferees gave the conference and overall rating of 4.3. There were even a number of people who felt the day could have been longer. Many people expressed enthusiasm for more conferences of this type.

Other highlights for 2005 were the commissioning of the two groups by Bishop Council at Convention, March 2005 and the presentation to each member of a stole specially created for ARC/ART members to indicate a special ministry that belongs to all people. In October, ARC/ART spent a day of reflection and retreat at St. Thomas, Red Bank. And, we achieved a 25.63% response (41) to a survey to identify communities of color among 160 active congregations. We have also formalized a "Wall of History" detailing Racism and Resistance in the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey.

We had several major objectives for 2005:

- To establish an all day conference on racism. This objective was achieved with a partnership of the Anti-Racism Commission, Hispanic Commission, Union of Black Episcopalians and the Black Clergy Caucus, presenting the conference cited above.
- To formalize a proposal for an Ombudsman function within the diocese. The proposal will be presented to Bishop Council during the first quarter of 2006.
- To hold a retreat of ARC/ART for the purposes of reflection, and team building. As reported above, the retreat was held in October.
- To increase the number of training sessions in parishes where People of Color are predominant. We scheduled training with two parishes and completed one in 2005. The other was carried over to early 2006, due to the appointment of a new rector.

For 2006, the ARC/ART will continue to work with leadership throughout our diocese to address an anti-racism ministry. In this regard, we will be seeking to further engage our Latino clergy and congregations in this valuable ministry. We have begun negotiations with the Hispanic Commission and with representatives of Crossroads Ministry to present a workshop relevant to the Latino community. As we work to transform our diocese into an anti-racist institution, we strive to recall our congregations and parishioners to our theological commitment to live the Baptismal Covenant.

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

Faithfully,

The Anti-Racism Commission of the Diocese of New Jersey
January 24, 2006