

Mission Statement for the Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Oakland

The Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs Commission shall put into practice directives and orientations put forth by the Bishop, and, in general, promote ecumenical and interreligious activity in the diocese.

The membership of the Commission is to reflect as much as possible, the total character of the diocese: geographical, ethnically, racially, clergy, religious men and women, and lay people.

The Commission shall cooperate with such institutions or ecumenical/interreligious initiatives as already exist, or are to be set up, making use of their help where the occasion presents itself. It shall support the ecumenical and interreligious officer and be available to other diocesan and individual initiatives for mutual exchange of information and ideas; especially with regards to: contacts with parishes and parish organizations, apostolic initiatives being conducted by members of institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, and with movements and associations of lay people.

Additionally, the diocesan Commission is charged to:

a) put into practice the decisions of the diocesan Bishop for implementing the teaching and directives of the Second Vatican Council on ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, as well as those of the post-conciliar documents emanating from the Holy See, Synods of the Eastern Catholic Churches and Episcopal Conferences;

b) maintain relations with the territorial ecumenical/interreligious commissions, adapting recommendations and advice from these groups to local contexts. When circumstances suggest, information about experiences and their results as well as other useful information should be sent to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue;

c) promote positive relationships and projects of mutual interest between Catholics and other Christians with whom full ecclesial communion does not yet exist according to the suggestions and guidelines given (AOPNOE nn. 205-218)

--Foster spiritual ecumenism according to the principles given in the conciliar Decree on Ecumenism and the use of public and private prayer for the unity of Christians recommended in the Application On Principles and Norms On Ecumenism (AOPNOE);

d) promote positive relationships and projects of mutual interest with followers of other religious traditions;

--Foster greater understanding between and among religious traditions following the guidelines of the Pontifical Council of Interreligious Dialogue and the Commission for Relations with Jews (which is a subsidiary of the Council for Ecumenism)

--Initiate and guide conversations and consultations with them, bearing in mind the adaptation to be observed in accordance with the diversity of the participants and subject of dialogue;

--Propose experts to undertake dialogue on the diocesan level with other faith communities and religious groups;

e) promote, in collaboration with other diocesan bodies and with other Christians and other religions to the extent that this is possible, cooperation in such areas as education, public and private morality, social justice, matters connected with culture, learning and the arts;

f) offer help and encouragement by such means as workshops and seminars for the theological formation of both clergy and laity concerning ecumenism and interreligious dialogue;

--give special attention as to how seminary students are prepared for the ecumenical/interreligious dimension of preaching, catechetics and other forms of teaching, and pastoral activity (e.g., pastoral care in mixed marriages) etc.;

g) propose to the Bishop the mutual exchange of observers and guests on occasions such as important conferences, synods, installation of religious leaders and other similar occasions;

h) encourage parishes to participate in ecumenical/interreligious initiatives. In these activities the parishes are encouraged to remain in close contact with this commission and as appropriate with the diocesan authorities, exchanging information and experience with them and with other parishes and other groups.

i) develop and maintain a list of various types of resources helpful in Interreligious and Ecumenical dialogue, including a webpage on the diocesan website.

Approved by the Commission and Bishop Salvatore Cordileone, June 2010