



For Immediate Release

Archbishop Paul D. Etienne Creates Racial Justice and Cultural Diversity Commission

Commission to Advise Archdiocese on Belonging, Dignity and Justice

SEATTLE, May 6, 2021 – With the recent social unrest and increased divisiveness in our society, Archbishop Paul D. Etienne recognized the need to create an advisory group dedicated to racial justice. He formed a new Racial Justice and Cultural Diversity Commission to guide the Archdiocese of Seattle on issues and initiatives concerning intercultural competency and the sin of racism.

“As members of the Body of Christ, we must continue to break down prevailing attitudes and any expressions of racism — both in the Church and in our communities,” said Archbishop Etienne. “We will confront racism and injustice directly so that healing can occur. As Catholics, we are called to transform our institutions and society into one that respects the dignity and rights of all people.”

With a focus on ongoing reform, this external commission composed of lay Catholics and clergy will begin its work on three key initiatives:

1. Terminology – The commission will support the development of common terms and definitions around belonging, dignity and justice to create a foundation for all archdiocesan efforts.
2. Standards of behavior – The commission will advise on appropriate standards of behavior for all employees that uplift belonging, dignity and justice.
3. Intercultural training – The commission will audit current training offerings and make recommendations for a standard intercultural training program for all archdiocesan employees, including those at schools and parishes.

“Educating employees about racism and elevating racial justice is important so that we can bring Christ’s love to everyone and model it for everyone in our communities,” said Archbishop Etienne. “In addition to education and reform efforts, it is also very important that we recognize and celebrate the diversity in our communities, since we are one Body of Christ.”

Racial Justice and Cultural Diversity Commission

The commission will meet to discuss the key initiatives and form working groups. Information about their work and progress can be found on [this webpage](#). Members of the commission include:

Primary lead staff:

- Erica Cohen Moore, Director for the Office of Pastoral Ministries
- Deacon Carl Chilo, Director for Multicultural Ministries
- Sandy Barton-Smith, Assistant Superintendent for Catholic Schools

Support staff:

- Arlene Seifert, Chief Human Resources Officer
- Annie Bailey, Director for Young Adult Ministry

Commission members:

- Patrick Barredo, Filipino American
Pastoral Assistant for Outreach, St. James Cathedral, Seattle
- Clarence Bob, Native American, Lummi Tribe
St. Joachim, Bellingham
- Mary Pauline Diaz-Frasene, Filipino American
St. Therese, Seattle
- Deacon Felix Garcia, Hispanic American
Deacon and staff, St. Joseph, Vancouver
- Michael Hale, African American
St. Leo the Great, Tacoma
Member, Archdiocesan Black Catholic Advisory Circle
- Barbara Henderson, African American
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director, Bellarmine Preparatory High School
St. Leo the Great, Tacoma
- Angie Lee, Korean American
St. Andrew Kim, Seattle
- Mercedes Lui, Samoan American
Sacred Heart, Lacey
- Malcolm Nelson, African American, young adult
St. Therese Catholic Academy, Seattle
Teacher, studying to be a principal
- Father Carlos Orozco, Hispanic American
Parochial Vicar, St. Louise, Bellevue
- Mykhanh Phan, Vietnamese American, young adult
St. Joseph, Seattle
- Deacon Dr. Ronnie San Nicholas, Guamanian American
Sacred Heart, Lacey
- Sister Moira DeBono, RSM, Sisters of Mary

About the Archdiocese of Seattle

The Archdiocese of Seattle encompasses all of Western Washington, stretching from Canada to Oregon and from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. There are 72 Catholic Schools, 168 parishes, missions and pastoral centers in the archdiocese, with more than 500 weekly Masses celebrated in eight languages. Archbishop Paul D. Etienne leads the archdiocese with his two auxiliary bishops, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo and Bishop Daniel Mueggenborg. For more information about the Archdiocese of Seattle, visit archseattle.org.

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