



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARLINGTON

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BISHOP MICHAEL F. BURBIDGE, CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON, ESTABLISHES NEW ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RACISM

Council to Develop and Oversee Implementation of Plan to Address Racism in all its Forms in the Diocese

ARLINGTON, Va. – Today, Bishop Michael F. Burbidge, Catholic Diocese of Arlington, announced the creation of the Bishop’s Advisory Council on Racism (Advisory Council). The Advisory Council comprises Black clergy and lay men and women from across the Diocese who will advise Bishop Burbidge on issues related to race. The council will identify practical ways to address racism in all its forms and its harmful impact on communities and individuals of various races and ethnicities. Council members bring with them a wide range of expertise from extensive service in the military and both the public and private sectors.

“I am confident this new council’s work will go a long way in addressing racism in communities throughout our diocese. As we come face to face with the evil of racism, we must remember always that God has created us in his image and likeness. We are members of his Holy Family. Together, by the grace of God, we can achieve greater understanding and move forward in confident hope in the transforming power of Christ,” said Bishop Burbidge. “In 2018, my brother bishops and I issued a [pastoral letter against racism](#) which urges ‘a genuine conversion that will compel change and the reform of our institutions and society.’ I pray that this council’s work helps bring us closer to that goal and, in doing so, enable us to find the courage not to be silent and to carry the light of Christ, peacefully and boldly, to others.”

The Advisory Council will seek to identify where instances of racism, prejudice and bias have impacted individuals and broader communities in the Diocese. The council will also develop and oversee implementation of a plan with achievable ways to address racism and help bring about positive change. The council consists of 14 individuals who will serve appointments with three-year terms, meeting at least four times a year. For the names and bios of the full council, see [here](#). The council’s first meeting will take place in October.

“I am grateful to Bishop Burbidge for his leadership in taking this important initiative and pulling this committee together, particularly at this time in our country’s history,” said councilmember Sharon McCarter. “Racism is a terrible evil in our country and the world. I am honored to be asked to help see what we can do to effectively address this together. My hope is that the work that we do not only helps our diocese but reaches into communities across the country, bringing new hope and unity as we move forward.”

Bishop Burbidge announced the decision to form an advisory council on racism on August 1, 2020, at a prayer service on racism. He is establishing the council to build upon a number of initiatives the Diocese has undertaken to address racism. On the memorial of St. Peter Claver, Bishop Burbidge celebrated a Mass for Peace in Our Communities. In August, Bishop Burbidge and Catholic Charities hosted a forum to address racism, “Racism: Understanding, Conversion, and Action.” Bishop Burbidge also celebrated a Mass and then

led an evening Rosary for the Preservation of Peace and Justice. Last year, he held a listening session on racism, which was widely attended.

In March 2021, the Diocese of Arlington's Peace and Justice Commission is hosting "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love," a forum to address racism which will include Mass and a panel discussion. This forum was originally scheduled for March of this year and rescheduled due to the onset of the coronavirus.

Interested media, please contact Amber Roseboom, Director of Media Relations, Catholic Diocese of Arlington, at 571-215-8731 or Amber.Roseboom@arlingtondiocese.org.

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The Catholic Diocese of Arlington was established on August 13, 1974, and is home to 70 parishes and more than 460,000 Catholics. There are currently 276 priests serving in the Diocese and 49 seminarians discerning a priestly vocation. The Diocese has 37 parish (K-8) schools, four diocesan high schools, four independent Catholic schools and five free-standing (not connected with a parish school) pre-schools, serving more than 17,000 students.

Geographically, the Diocese includes the seven cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Manassas Park, and Winchester and the 21 counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, King George, Lancaster, Loudoun, Madison, Northumberland, Orange, Page, Prince William, Rappahannock, Richmond, Shenandoah, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Warren and Westmoreland.