

COMMISSION ON RACISM

The Commission on Racism of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh is called to work for the annihilation of racism in our church and communities while fostering the healing of all persons.

General Convention Resolution A062 (1982) requests that Dioceses and Congregations form committees on Racism to study, identify and confront the causes of racism.

GC Resolution B049 (2000) mandates anti-racism training for all in leadership positions both lay and clergy. These workshops provide the opportunity for studying and attempting to root out the causes of racism. The fall workshop was held on October 3 and 4 at the Church of the Redeemer, Squirrel Hill. The spring workshop will be April 24 and 25, 2015.

GC Resolution A127 (2012) adds that training should be continued on an on-going basis. A variety of formats are being used to provide additional educational experiences both to those who have attended the workshops and those who have not.

2014 emphases of the COR were:

- 1.) An increase in the number and variety of educational experiences; and
- 2.) Further exploration of recruitment of minorities for ordained ministry.

Educational experiences:

In November 2013, one member of the COR and one member of the Standing Committee represented the Diocese at the Episcopal Church Forum “50 Years Later: The State of Racism in America” held in Jackson, Mississippi. In March 2014, one member of the Commission represented the Diocese at the Annual White Privilege Conference held in Madison, WI. In each instance reports from those events were presented to the Commission and we also recognize the need for a plan that provides the opportunity for conference and workshop attendees to share what they have experienced and learned with others in the Diocese.

The COR was represented at the Province III gathering of representatives from the Anti-racism/Reconciliation Committees/Commissions of the 13 dioceses in the Province. At these meetings, attendees exchange ideas, share and learn from each other. This year there was also a presentation made based on the presenters’ research. The second meeting of the group was a conference call on March 31, 2014.

Within the Diocese time was provided at Diocesan Convention at each District meeting for a discussion of two questions: What is your ethnic/cultural heritage? What are you most proud of from that heritage?

As part of the Absalom Jones Day Celebration there was a return to offering the opportunity to attend a focus group rather than having one panel discussion. There were four focus groups, each discussing a different topic related to Race. Although they were scheduled for one and a half hours, most extended to two hours.

The COR is now on Facebook and this provides an additional opportunity to share information both educational and experiential. The COR is also investigating the creation of a COR webpage.

In May 2014, COR was invited and agreed to become a co-sponsor of a series of meetings in the community. The title is “Race and Racism: A Conversation in Five Parts.” These moderated panel

discussions, which began in June and continued once a month through October, were offered by Freedom Unlimited, Inc. and were held at The Neighborhood Academy on Aiken Avenue.

Exploration of recruitment of minorities for ordination:

At the request of the Bishop, a letter was drafted and sent to him expressing the Commission's concerns. In response to this letter, a meeting was held between members of the COR Diversity Sub-committee and the Commission on Ministry. A second meeting was to follow but has not been scheduled.

At the 2013 Diocesan Convention, the COR submitted a Resolution that was adopted. The title was "Resolution to encourage diversity among lay and ordained leaders in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh."

The COR has an annual workday for reviewing and planning. The emphases for 2015 will be on:

- 1.) Creation or management of a COR webpage;
- 2.) Continue to work with Commission on Ministry to develop a plan for recruitment of minorities for ordained ministry; and
- 3.) Work to recruit Parish Communicators. They will receive COR communications and be responsible for distributing that information within their parish.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Travis Bolden, Chair