



TOGETHER IN FAITH AND FRIENDSHIP

May 2020

What's Happening—Ecumenically

We know that not everyone shares our Catholic faith, but we have a mandate from the writings and actions of our Holy Fathers and bishops to keep the doors open so that we can grow in understanding of one another, share common concerns, and act on behalf of the common good of humanity.

In our diocese, the Fellowship of South Carolina Bishops has continued its initiatives to confront hate and advocate for improvements in the quality of education for our children and youth. We serve, too, on the board of the South Carolina Christian Action Council and have participated in dialogue days, the crafting of public statements, and presence at the state capital to raise our voices for fair lending practices and an end to racism. We have also joined with the Interfaith Partners of South Carolina and many online groups to seek ways to build a more compassionate culture.

“It happens more and more that the leaders of Christian communities join together in taking a stand in the name of Christ on important problems concerning man’s calling and on freedom, justice, peace, and the future of the world.” St John Paul II,



Interfaith leaders join Vicar General Monsignor Harris at St. Joseph Church, Columbia



Care for Our Common Home

It's the fifth anniversary of "Laudato Si."

In response to an invitation from two groups under the auspices of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, our office is chairing a group drafting guidelines for parishes and dioceses on this topic of care for the planet.

Watch for announcements of upcoming days of dialogue on creation and stewardship which we're planning with Baha'i, Jewish, and Christian groups this fall.

Interfaith efforts—live and online

Every December 31 for a number of years, the State of South Carolina has reminded its citizens to observe January as Interfaith Harmony month. This January we had an opportunity to participate in a lecture at Columbia's Masjid Noor-UI-Huda Islamic Mosque located near the Lutheran Seminary of the South. That month we were active participants in a gathering sponsored by the Atlantic Institute and advertised by the Interfaith Partners of South Carolina (IPSC) at the public library in West Columbia on the theme of compassion.

Ecumenical events included one hosted by St. Paul Lutheran Church, Columbia, to help the South Carolina Christian Action Council (SCCAC) plan its February public witness at the state capitol to express concern about predatory lending practices and their impact on the poorest of the poor. St. Joseph Catholic Church hosted its annual gathering of their students' pastors and faith leaders. This has been a custom for Catholic Schools Week. This year Episcopalian, Lutheran, United Methodist, Baptist, and Buddhist clergy joined Catholic pastors and a parochial vicar. In February, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Charleston hosted an ecumenical concert. That same month IPSC board meeting at Richland Library in which plans for public events celebrating interfaith understanding were laid. IPSC in particular replaced a number of its planned events with regular interactive Zoom meetings.

A Few New Things

While a number of activities were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had a great opportunity to join several new groups for numerous online discussions and prayer. Greenfaith, the Rumi Forum, and the Center for Interfaith Relations actively invited not only online attendance but chat on topics which included care for creation, humanitarian responses to suffering, Palestinian-Israeli relations, and the ministry of healing. A moving interfaith offering for the National Day of Prayer featured representatives of seven faith traditions on May 7. We also joined Interfaith Power and Light and Christian Justice ministries online.

At Masjid Noor-UI-Huda Mosque

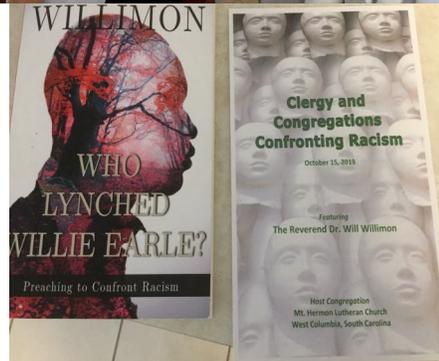


Catholics and other Christians join in book studies, lectures, and discussions on the troubling topic of racism.

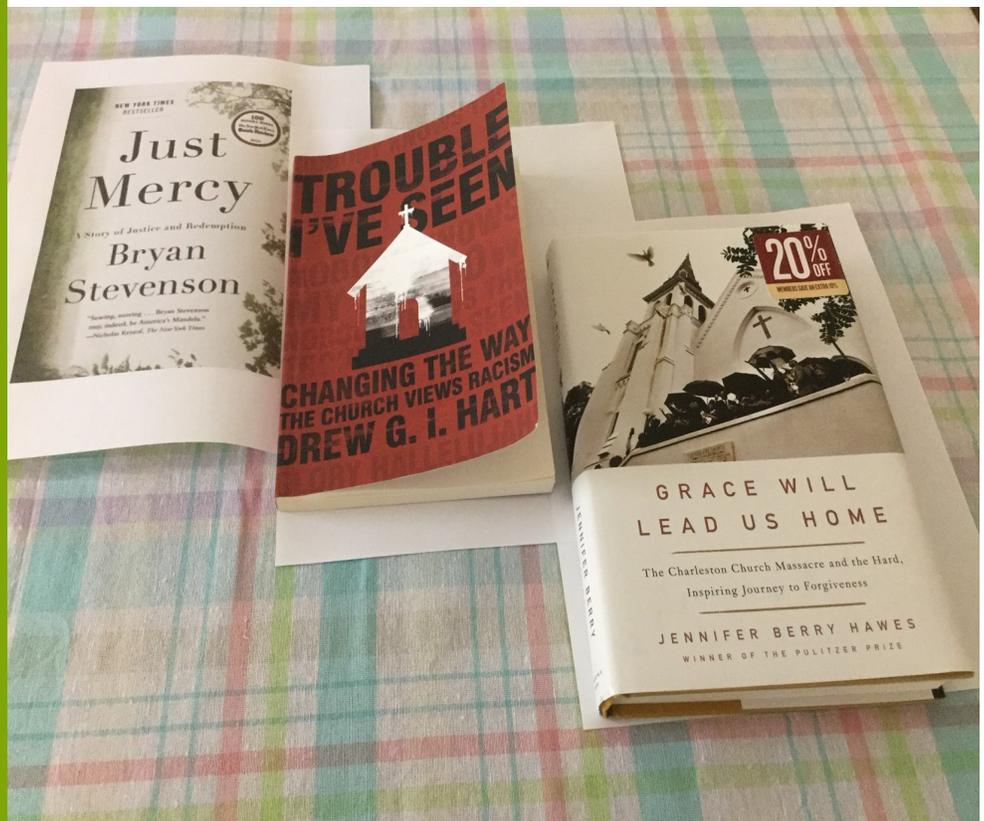
Bishop Guglielmone preached on the importance of good and Godly race relations at the SCCAC annual meeting.

A few months later, author Will Willimon lectured on an upstate lynching that finally changed some hearts—through preacher’s efforts to do so.

Beginning in January 2020, Catholics picked up the project of book studies recommended by the Fellowship of South Carolina Bishops and two churches in Charleston affected by the killings at Mother Emanuel in 2015. Our diocesan Office of Ethnic Ministries had people reading and viewing “Just Mercy.” Our ecumenical office got groups at St. Gregory in Bluffton and St. Anne in Rock Hill to use “Trouble I’ve Seen” and “Grace Will Lead Us Home” for honest discussions about the persistence of racism and how to combat it.



Two SCCAC events in 2019-2020: a presentation by our Bishop Robert Guglielmone and a lecture on a notorious hate crime in South Carolina’s upstate.



There's More to Come

As mentioned inside, we will be looking to offer dialogue days and faith formation in response to the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' desire to spread the word about the moral need to care for our planet. We have already taken initial steps to work with Baha'i and Baptist leaders in Columbia and a rabbi in Hilton Head with a promise that we will coordinate these programs. We also hope to reschedule an ecumenical gathering originally planned for Pentecost Sunday at Mepkin Abbey.

Then, of course, there's the Bicentennial of the Diocese of Charleston, which we will be continuing to celebrate through December 2020. Watch diocesan media outlets for announcements of events in which we can link arms with other faith leaders.

Also see Sister Pam's Facebook page (Pamela A. Smith) **for photos and text about interfaith events or check her columns in The Catholic Miscellany and the Charleston Mercury.**

Check the diocesan website, Caritas, and The Catholic Miscellany on Facebook.

"The ferment of the Gospel has aroused and continues to arouse in human hearts an unquenchable thirst for human dignity."—Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, #26

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Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our events and programs.

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