

TOGETHER IN FAITH AND FRIENDSHIP No. 5

OFFICE OF ECUMENICAL & INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON

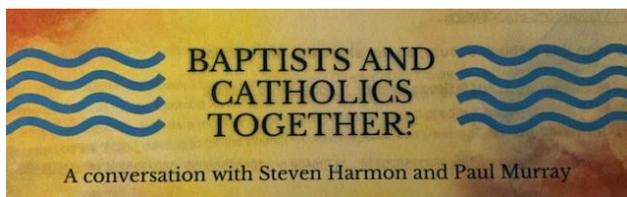
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2021



REAL TIME, REAL LIFE ACTIVITY AND VIRTUAL ECUMENISM TOO

Papal directives and encyclicals and the declarations and decrees of the Second Vatican Council charged Catholics with entering into dialogue with fellow Christians and persons of other faiths on theological and spiritual topics while also joining forces on behalf of the common good. People in our state and in our diocese have been involved in both of those activities throughout recent months. Some have joined in real time, face-to-face events. Our diocesan seminarians, for example, had a presentation on ecumenism and interfaith relations from a doctrinal and practical point of view while at their annual retreat. Others have been about the business of sharing faith and working toward common understanding virtually—on Facebook, on Zoom meetings, in webinars. Many of the online events lend themselves to nation-wide and even international outreach and cooperation.

The photos below are from international Baptist-Catholic dialogues hosted by Glenmary Missionaries and New City Press in September.

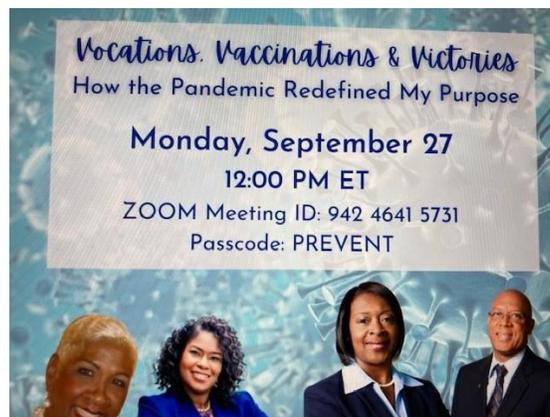


Dr. Harmon, a Baptist theologian from the US and Dr. Paul Murray, a Catholic scholar on ecumenical commissions in England, have discussed how each tradition can capitalize on commonalities and learn from the others' strengths. The dialogue partners spoke of how Catholics can learn effective means of preaching and internalizing Scripture and how Baptists can learn about how liturgical celebration enriches faith and how a denomination functions with hierarchical organization.

Another online event that attracted international attendance was a webinar entitled “Social Media: Sainly or Satanic?” The educational session was hosted in the US by CEEP, an Episcopalian Consortium on Evangelization and Preaching and was open to all. It provided useful tips about wise use of social media for religious purposes.



Around the state, and crossing state lines, the South Carolina Christian Action Council has been providing a series of educational sessions on preventive health care, vaccinations, and tips on how to survive in church life, home life, school life, and business as the pandemic continues. The photo below is the Facebook headline for a recent event.



LOCAL INITIATIVES AND BEYOND

Parishioners from a number of deaneries and parishes participate regularly in online gatherings of the Interfaith Partners of South Carolina, the Interfaith Partners of Aiken, the Atlantic Institute, the South Carolina Christian Action Council, and ongoing conversations sprung from the Confronting Hate project launched by the Fellowship of South Carolina Bishops.

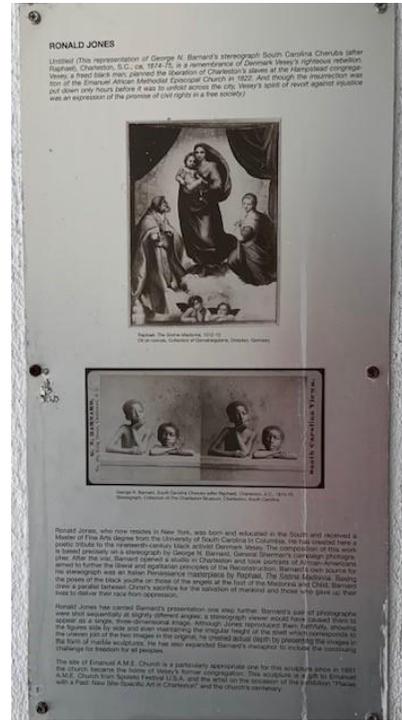


The recent monthly meet-ups of the Interfaith Partners of South Carolina (IPSC) have focused on native religions, neo-paganism, and the predatory practices of cults (often termed pseudo-religious cults). The monthly meetings of the Interfaith Partners of Aiken, facilitated by Bill Collins of St. Mary Help of Christians, have discussed personal faith journeys and Christian-Muslim relations. The latter have been enriched by the regular participation of an Aiken couple who spend part of each year in Turkey. The Atlantic Institute has hosted visits of places of worship and cross-cultural cooking features, with an eye to enriching mutual understanding by expanding exposure to ethnic traditions. The South Carolina Christian Action Council (SCCAC), as mentioned above, is focusing currently on community education and combatting racism, while also targeting development of young adults for church ecumenical ministry. The Confronting Hate group continues to meet both in-person and virtually in Bluffton for book study and discussion of current events, media, and family issues in minority communities.

The visit to Mother Emanuel included a recounting of the massacre that occurred at the Bible study in June 2015. Rev. Dr. Regina Moore, CEO of the SCCAC, and Minister Stephanie Cassell, summer intern are shown here. And then the intern with two more of us at the African American Museum, under construction.



One of the interesting artworks at Mother Emanuel is truly ecumenical. As part of a memorial to Denmark Vesey, who was executed after being charged with instigating a slave rebellion, there is this artistic representation entitled "African American Cherubs." As can be seen, the cherubs are modeled on cherubs shown in a painting by Raphael depicting the Madonna and Child.



FEEDING THE HUNGRY

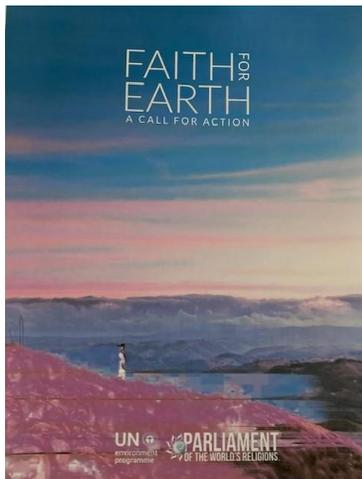
Individual parishes have undertaken ecumenical initiatives. St Peter Catholic Church in Beaufort has purchased and outfitted a trailer which will circulate among area Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran churches to collect food for the St. Francis Center at St. Helena Island, which serves hundreds and hundreds of clients seeking food and other forms of assistance throughout the week.



DRIVE TO CARE FOR CREATION CONTINUES

For more than two years now, we have been involved with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the Catholic Climate Covenant, and the Catholic Association of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers (CADEIO). Jointly, we have produced a guidebook for use by parishes, diocesan directors, and various Catholic groups promoting stewardship and the ideals of *Laudato Si.*' The guidebook, presented to the public in January 2021, has prompted online interfaith and ecumenical discussions which have drawn an international cast of presenters and participants. The last of the series is slated for the feast of St. Francis of Assisi on October 4, from 11:00 AM-Noon. Sister Pamela Smith, SS.C.M. will present, hosted by Father Walter Kedjierski, Executive Director of the Secretariat of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, USCCB.

Shown below is a screen shot of one of the recent dialogues on another document, entitled "Faith for Earth," issued by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Parliament of the World's Religions.



UPCOMING EVENTS

October 4 USCCB, CADEIO, Catholic Climate Covenant Care for Creation Dialogue 11:00-Noon
Register at www.creation.cadeio.org. Click on Ecumenical and Interreligious Guidebook: Care for Our Common Home

October 5 IPSCC (Interfaith Partners of South Carolina) 7:00 PM discussion on the Baha'i faith
Tune in via www.interfaithpartnersofsc.org

October 30 Fellowship of South Carolina Bishops present Episcopal Bishop Michael Curry on "Love Is the Way: The Cost of Beloved Community" 9:00 AM at the Conference Center at Capstone Hall, University of South Carolina, Columbia.
Register at <https://scsynod.com/2021dialogue>

Also check online for Rumi Forum, Anti-Defamation League, Atlantic Institute for events of interest.
