

How Can the Commission for Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs Help?

We consider the development of a PEIR network very important to the growth of ecumenical and interreligious relations throughout the Diocese, and offer to be of assistance to pastors and to PEIRs in any way possible.

Each year, the Commission will provide opportunities for ongoing formation and networking to assist the PEIR in the exercise of his/her ministry. Letters and e-mail messages will be sent to each PEIR as an additional means of keeping them updated on local, national and worldwide ecumenical and interreligious developments.

Upon request, the Commission also supplies a timely bibliography, listing articles, books, and other materials pertinent to ecumenical and interreligious dialogues, events and ministries.

*Father, all-powerful and
ever-living God, we do
well always and
everywhere to give you
thanks through Jesus
Christ our Lord.
Through Christ you bring
us to the knowledge of
your truth, that we may be
united by one faith and one
baptism to become his
body.
Through Christ you have
given the Holy Spirit to all
peoples.
How wonderful are the
works the Spirit, revealed
in so many gifts!
Yet how marvelous is the
unity the Spirit creates
from their diversity, as he
dwells in the hearts
of your children, filling the
whole Church with his
presence and guiding it
with his wisdom!*

(From the Preface for Christian Unity
from the *Missale Romanum*, English
translation, second typical edition.)

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Diocese of Phoenix

PEIR

*Parish Ecumenical and Interreligious
Representative*

“The ecumenical movement is a grace of God given by the Father in answer to the prayer of Jesus and the supplication of the Church inspired by the Holy Spirit... Those who are baptized in the name of Christ are, by that very fact, called to commit themselves to the search for unity.... To live our Baptism is to be caught up in Christ’s mission of making all things **one.**” (Vatican [Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism](#), 22)

What is the Parish Ecumenical and Interreligious Representative?

The Parish Ecumenical and Interreligious Representative (PEIR) is a parishioner designated by the pastor who has a special role in communicating and coordinating local ecumenical and interreligious activity.

Why a PEIR?

The desire and the effort to have a Parish Ecumenical and Interreligious Representative appointed in each parish receives support from the Vatican *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* (March 25, 1993): The parish, as an ecclesial unity gathered around the Eucharist, should be and proclaim itself to be the place of authentic ecumenical witness. Thus a great task for the parish is to educate its members in the ecumenical spirit. This calls for a pastoral program which involves someone charged with promoting and planning ecumenical activity, working in close harmony with the parish priest; this will help in the various forms of collaboration with the corresponding parishes of other Christians. (67)

The Spirituality and Personal Development of the PEIR

“Mutual support and spiritual nurture are vital ingredients enabling people to pursue the vision of Christian unity with faithfulness, persistence and resiliency.” (*Envoys for Ecumenism* – Massachusetts Council of Churches)

For “the concern for unity is fundamental to the understanding of the Church. The objective of ecumenical formation is that all Christians be animated by the ecumenical spirit, whatever their particular mission and task in the world and in society.” (*Vatican Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 58)

To develop an ecumenical and interreligious spirituality, the PEIR might consider:

- The practice of daily prayer and meditation “that they may all be one, so that the world may believe” (Jn 17:21), since private and public prayer for the unity of Christians is regarded by Vatican II as the soul of the ecumenical movement.
- Regular reading that will deepen one’s own understanding and appreciation of the ecumenical movement in the Church and of other faith traditions as well - both Christian and non-Christian.
- Facilitating and/or participating in at least one ecumenical and/or interreligious service annually (e.g. during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity)
- Attending the Diocesan PEIR meetings offered to form participants in the spirit and practice of ecumenism and interreligious relations.
- Taking advantage of opportunities to participate in ecumenical and interreligious sponsored forums, conferences (e.g. the annual AEC Donohue Forum) and other activities.

Functions of the PEIR

- To assist and support the pastor in making the parish “the place of authentic ecumenical witness”
- To foster a deeper ecumenical and interreligious awareness among parishioners

- To encourage and facilitate parish participation in local ecumenical and interreligious activities
- To represent the parish, when appropriate according to local custom, with neighborhood ecumenical and interreligious organizations or ministerial associations
- To serve as a liaison between the parish, the Diocesan Director for Ecumenism and the Diocesan Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

The Pastor’s Role

- Each pastor is asked to name a parishioner to this position and to submit the name to the Diocesan Director for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. Appointing a PEIR is a realistic way to promote the Church’s ecumenical and interreligious goals.
- The PEIR will then serve as the contact for the parish. While other staff members and volunteers may assist the PEIR in the parish’s ecumenical and interreligious activity, the PEIR works directly with the pastor and is ultimately responsible to him concerning such involvement.