

Archbishop Lori Announces Statewide Task Force on Racism

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In an effort to better improve race relations and to address the sin of racism that continues to be a divisive force in our country, Archbishop William E. Lori, Archbishop of Baltimore and Chairman of the Maryland Catholic Conference, announced the creation of a statewide task force on racism. Co-chaired by Bishop Denis J. Madden, auxiliary bishop emeritus and urban vicar of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and Bishop Roy E. Campbell, Jr., auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington, the workgroup includes leaders from the state's Catholic African-American and Latino communities, legislators, historians, scholars and others who will bring a diverse perspective to the important work of the task force.

The group held its first meeting in Baltimore Monday.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops created a Task Force on Peace and Unity last year in response to heightened racial tensions around the country, including the riots surrounding the death of Freddie Gray here in Maryland and recently announced the creation of an ongoing Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, to which Archbishop Lori has been named a Consultor. Committee chairman, Bishop George J. Murry, SJ, said the Committee will “listen to the needs of individuals who have suffered under the sin of racism and together find solutions to this epidemic of hate that has plagued our nation for far too long.”

They also invited local bishops to examine the issue and promote ways of addressing racism in local dioceses.

“The dreadful spectacle of violence and racism displayed in Charlottesville by

various white supremacist groups is a shocking reminder of how much work still needs to be done to eradicate the sin of racism in our country, our state, and our local communities,” Archbishop Lori said. “While many good efforts are ongoing within the Catholic Church here in Maryland, we know that we are far from where we need to be in fostering a truly loving, diverse community where all are welcomed and embraced, regardless of the color of their skin, the language they speak, or their country of origin.

“This effort will require the courage to take an honest look at our past, the humility to repent of the ways we have actively caused pain or turned a deaf ear to those who suffer from the evil of racism, and a firm faith in the power of God’s love as we begin the path to reconciliation. We ask for the prayers of Maryland’s Catholic community and all people of good will as we turn to this work with renewed zeal and urgency. May St. Peter Claver inspire and bless our coming together as we journey ever closer toward building the kingdom of God.”