

Cardinal Keeler Chosen by U.S. Department of State to Attend International Conference on Race Relations

Cardinal William H. Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore, has been selected by the U.S. Department of State to attend the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Conference on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, being held September 13-14 in Brussels, Belgium.

The concept of the Conference is to create dialogue and partnerships towards tolerance, respect and mutual understanding. Its purpose is to deliver a clear and distinctive message on the value of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, the unacceptability of racist, xenophobic and discriminatory actions and attitudes, and to arrive at action-oriented results to combat them. The Conference should also focus on exploring and identifying additional concrete measures that the OSCE and participating states might take to address problems more effectively.

“This conference makes it very clear that these different countries finally consider it important to address issues related to discrimination,” Cardinal Keeler said.

Specific aspects of dialogue during the conference, include: legal and institutional measures for combating discrimination; promoting inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue and partnerships both between citizens and governments and among citizens themselves; combating all forms of racism, xenophobia, discrimination and anti-Semitism; mechanisms to promote more effectively integration of migrant workers into the societies in which they legally reside; and promoting tolerance, respect for diversity and non-discrimination through education and media, including the Internet.

Cardinal Keeler will introduce the session entitled, “The Role of Governments and Civil Society in Promoting Tolerance, Respect and Mutual Understanding,

Particularly Through Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue and Partnerships.”

“This is an area in which I have a particular interest,” Cardinal Keeler said. “The major religions that have roots in Abraham—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—have as their primary focus that one should work for reconciliation and peace.”

Cardinal Keeler currently serves as moderator of Catholic-Jewish relations for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.