

## **2013 MID-ATLANTIC MUSLIM-CATHOLIC DIALOGUE COMPLETES ROUND ON PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES OF EDUCATION FOR MUSLIM AND CATHOLIC EDUCATORS**

WASHINGTON—Representatives of the Mid-Atlantic Catholic and Muslim Dialogue have completed their multi-year project of producing guidelines and principles for Catholic and Muslim educators charged with teaching the rudiments of one another's faith tradition. The two documents are entitled "*Understanding Islam: A Guide for Catholic Educators*" and "*Understanding Catholicism: A Guide for Muslim Educators*".

The meeting was held at St. Paul's North American College in Washington, D.C. on April 2-3, 2013. Auxiliary Bishop Barry Knestout of Washington, D.C. and Dr. Talat Sultan of the Islamic Circle of North America, presided.

The final draft version of *Understanding Islam: A Guide for Catholic Educators* was prepared by Dr. Sandra Keating (principal author) of Providence College, Dr. Pim Valkenberg of The Catholic University of America, and Paulist Father Tom Ryan. After consultation with the Muslim participants, who provided suggestions for bringing the document to a conclusion, the final version endeavors to provide an historical survey of Islam, a description of the Qur'an, an explanation of Shar'ia law, and a consideration of social and cultural issues that are relevant to, and anticipate the questions of, modern students.

The final draft version of *Understanding Catholicism: A Guide for Muslim Educators* was prepared by Shaykh Aboor Rahman Khan (principal author) and resident scholar, Islamic Foundation of Villa Park, Chicago. After consultation with Catholic dialogue member Rev. Dr. Sydney Griffith, it was concluded that the final version needed to provide a more faithful rendering of Catholic doctrine on the Incarnation and the Trinity, as well as revisions to the document's presentation of the church and other doctrinal matters. Most of all, it was encouraged by the Catholic participants that any interpretation of Christianity through the sole lens of the Qur'an needed to be curtailed so as to provide an interpretation of Catholicism that is consistent with the Catholic tradition of self-understanding. The Catholic participants were confident that these corrections were made and are reflected in the final version.

In addition to the co-chairs, the Muslim representatives at the meeting included former ICNA president Zahid Bukhari, Ph.D.; Shaykh Abdur Rahman Khan, resident scholar, Islamic Foundation Villa Park, Chicago; Naeem Baig, Ph.D., current ICNA President, Muhammad Abdul Jabbar, Ph.D., of Bayshore, New York; Muhammad T. Rahman, secretary general of ICNA; Khursid Khan, Ph.D., principal of MDQ Academy, Bayshore, New York; Imam Hafiz Zafeer Ali, Jamaica, New York; Asim Kahn, Alexandria, VA; and Imam Hamad Ahmad Chebli, Monmouth Jct., NJ.

Additional Catholic representatives included Rev. Dr. Sidney Griffith, chairman of the Institute of Christian Oriental Research, The Catholic University of America (CUA); Pim Valkenberg, Ph.D., professor of religion, CUA; Sandra Keating, Professor of Religion, Providence College;

Paulist Father Tom Ryan, ecumenical and interreligious officer, North American Paulist Center, Washington; Kirsten Evans, program specialist, Secretariat of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (SEIA), U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB); and Anthony Cirelli, Ph.D., Associate Director, USCCB SEIA.

Next year's meeting will be hosted by the Muslim participants in New Jersey, site to be determined.