

Statement by the Members of the Mid-Atlantic Dialogue between Catholics and Muslims
May 6, 2010

In 1996, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Islamic Circle of North America entered into formal dialogue for the express purpose of deepening mutual understanding and respect between Catholics and Muslims in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States.

Most of the Catholic participants have been the ecumenical and interreligious delegates of their respective diocesan bishops; most of the Muslim participants, already active in local interfaith dialogue programs, were acquaintances of their Catholic partners in those communities. In addition, scholars and specialists have been called upon to explain certain aspects of theology and practice relevant to our discussions.

Together we have engaged a broadly representative spectrum of experience in interreligious relations. Our latest round of discussions has focused on “Developing a Strategic Plan on Interreligious Education” which we hope to present in the next two years. In the course of our recent discussions, it has become clear to us that the proliferation in the negative stereotypes, distorted information, and caricatures of both our traditions must be addressed at every level of society.

As we conclude our 14th meeting, the 15 members of the Mid-Atlantic Dialogue between Catholics and Muslims commit ourselves to the following:

1. To continue to work positively for mutual understanding and respect of all people of faith, but especially between our two faith traditions;
2. To support one another in confronting negative stereotypes which appear in the news media, films, internet, curricular and other printed material about our respective traditions;
3. To work with the leadership of our congregations and institutions in ensuring the same; and
4. To continue our work together to review and analyze the educational materials used by our congregations, schools and places of higher learning to ensure that we each are presenting materials that accurately represent what the other believes.

Signed:

Dr. Talat Sultan
Co-Chair

Most Rev. Denis Madden
Co-Chair

Date: May 6, 2010.