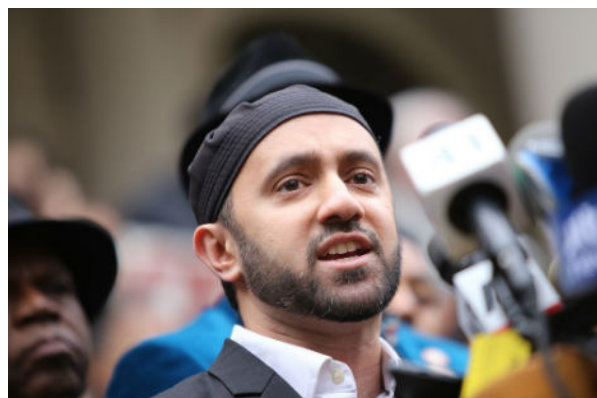


US bishops launch 'conversations' with Muslims

'The Catholic Church must help to model real dialogue and good will'

Compiled by Global Pulse Staff, *Global Pulse*, 10 February 2016



New York Police Department chaplain Imam Khalid Latif addresses an interfaith rally to denounce Donald Trump's call to ban Muslim entry into the US, Dec. 9, 2015. (Photo: [a katz / Shutterstock.com](#))

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has announced the launch of a new national Catholic-Muslim dialogue group to combat the climate of fear surrounding Islam.

The initiative will encourage "crucial conversations" between Catholics and Muslims in the US, according to *Christian Today*.

(<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/us.bishops.launch.crucial.conversations.between.catholics.and.muslims.to.counter.islamophobia/79134.htm>)

"As the national conversation around Islam grows increasingly fraught, coarse and driven by fear and often willful misinformation, the Catholic Church must help to model real dialogue and good will," Bishop Mitchell Rozanski of Springfield, Massachusetts, said in a USCCB statement.

Chicago Archbishop Blase J. Cupich will serve as the first Catholic co-chair but the Muslim co-chair is yet to be announced.

The bishops' ecumenical and interreligious committee has co-sponsored three regional Catholic-Muslim dialogues in the last 20 years, but this is the first national initiative, *Christian Today* says.

"As the national conversation around Islam grows increasingly fraught, coarse and driven by fear and often willful misinformation, the Catholic Church must help to model real dialogue and goodwill," Bishop Rozanski said.

"Our current dialogues have advanced the goals of greater understanding, mutual esteem and collaboration between Muslims and Catholics, and the members have established lasting ties of friendship and a deep sense of trust," he added.

The national dialogue will work alongside, not instead of, regional Catholic-Muslim dialogues. They are currently operating in the Mid-Atlantic, Midwest and West Coast and each is co-chaired by a bishop and a Muslim leader from the region. These dialogues will continue to meet and will work collaboratively with the members of the new national dialogue.

NATIONAL CATHOLIC-MUSLIM DIALOGUE LAUNCHED, ARCHBISHOP CUPICH NAMED CATHOLIC CO-CHAIR – NEWS RELEASE FROM THE US CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

February 8, 2016

WASHINGTON—Archbishop Blase J. Cupich of Chicago will serve as the first Catholic co-chair of a new National Catholic-Muslim Dialogue, sponsored by the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Archbishop Cupich's tenure as dialogue co-chair will begin January 1, 2017.

The bishops' ecumenical and interreligious committee has co-sponsored three regional Catholic-Muslim dialogues for over two decades. Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski of Springfield, Massachusetts, chair of the committee, said the time is right to begin a national dialogue.

"As the national conversation around Islam grows increasingly fraught, coarse and driven by fear and often willful misinformation, the Catholic Church must help to model real dialogue and good will," said Bishop Rozanski. "Our current dialogues have advanced the goals of greater understanding, mutual esteem and collaboration between Muslims and Catholics, and the members have established lasting ties of friendship and a deep sense of trust. I am grateful to Archbishop Cupich for agreeing to represent our Conference in this crucial conversation."

The current regional Catholic-Muslim dialogues are the Mid-Atlantic (partnering with the Islamic Circle of North America), Midwest (partnering with the Islamic Society of North America) and West Coast (partnering with the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California and the Islamic Educational Center of Orange County). Each is co-chaired by a bishop and a Muslim leader from the corresponding regional organization. These dialogues will continue to meet and will work collaboratively with the members of the new national dialogue.

The National Catholic-Muslim Dialogue follows a July 2014 statement of the bishops' ecumenical and interreligious committee, reaffirming their commitment to dialogue with Muslims: www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/interreligious/islam/dialogue-with-muslims-committee-statement.cfm

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