



cadeio

The Ecumenical/ Interreligious Officer and the Diocesan Commission

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The Ecumenical/Interreligious Affairs Officer (EIO), by the delegation and direction of his/her local Bishop, encourages and develops the principles and practices of ecumenism and interreligious understanding within the jurisdiction of his/her arch/diocese. The Officer also actively forms bonds of communication and collaboration, where appropriate and in the plan of the Ordinary, with corresponding Officers of other ecumenical networks, dioceses/judicatories or professional religious associations.

EIOs must be committed to knowing the mind of the Church in the work which they undertake, and be able to instruct and advise the process of appropriate faith sharing, prayer and dialogue. Knowledge of ecumenical process and history is obviously desirable, but every EIO must be committed to ongoing formation/education by taking advantage of available programs of study or conference/seminars which regularly take place. There is no shortage of materials available to EIOs for ongoing education.

1. The Position Description of the EIO

As the Bishop's delegate, the EIO is the primary representative of the Catholic diocese in conversations and activities with other religious bodies within the diocese, and works toward promoting interaction among the bishops, judicatory leaders and religious representatives through a determined schedule of annual events.

His/her level of involvement in this work needs to be realistically agreed upon by all involved, as most EIOs accept the responsibility already having a full-time, busy assignment and/or multiple other ministries. When selecting an EIO it would be important to consider the availability of someone to plan and execute even a portion of the duties suggested here, and availability and budget for conferences and ongoing education.

Dioceses follow different models of organization for ecumenical/interreligious work. In some cases, a Diocesan Ecumenical/Interreligious Commission is established based upon a team of Liaisons (clergy and lay persons) who each correspond to a different church/religious group in the diocese. It is a good way to provide personal attention through a member/delegate who is given authority personally to plan and attend conversations and activities, and report back to the EIO. Such “middle management” is very fruitful, particularly in large sees where the activity is prolific.

Though highly organized on the level of leadership, this model still requires the organization of persons on the “grassroots” level, hopefully to insure that Reception is given every opportunity to occur. This parochial level of organization is vital to the work of ecumenism and interreligious affairs in every place. In fact, EIOs almost always are surprised to discover that there are already many and varied forms of inter-church and inter-faith programs of prayer and social action already naturally taking place in their diocesan communities. Often, they just need to be publicized in such a way as to facilitate communities to teach each other how to proceed.

One best practice to organize this parish-to-parish level is by having a PEIRs (Parish Ecumenical/Interreligious Representatives) Network in the diocese. PEIRs, by meeting together, can plan activities between parishes also, and widen the scope of possibility. In the case of the Diocese of Arlington,

Bishop Loverde has for 11 years required the delegation of at least one lay person per parish by their Pastor to serve on the Diocesan PEIRs Network. Understandably, this network has fluctuated in its number and effectiveness over time, but a recent initiative to rebuild membership has been quite successful, as Pastors began to realize that this was their opportunity to be personally involved in the diocesan work of unity. They realize that they have input in shaping the network with people they themselves know to be solid and serious about the work of Christian unity and religious understanding.

Responsibilities of the EIO could include

To the Bishop:

- to meet regularly to know the preferences/direction of the Bishop in planning the annual calendar;
- to give regular briefings on developments relating to ecumenical/interreligious issues;
- to provide reports with regard to progress of various ecumenical or interreligious relationships and activities within the diocese, and summaries of dialogues and conferences attended;
- to provide diocesan representation on various state or regional boards or committees as desired by the Bishop, such as LARCUM, state Councils of Churches or formal dialogues;
- to establish an annual calendar of events;
- to serve as observer for the diocese at the annual Assemblies/Councils/Conventions of other churches/religious groups;
- to plan and submit a budget proposal for approval.

To the Diocesan Ecumenical/Interreligious Commission:

- (if needed) to form a committee of Liaisons to serve dialogue with individual churches/religious groups under the guidance of the Bishop;
- (if needed) to form a network of PEIRs

to bring the Church's mission of unity and understanding to members of other churches located in their neighborhoods;

- to serve as a resource for PEIRs answering frequently asked questions;
- to determine the need for and plan to provide opportunities for education which may be needed by Commission members;
- to chair regular Commission meetings (at least twice each year, perhaps meeting with Liaisons in the morning followed by a plenary joined with PEIRs in the afternoon for reports and continuing education, perhaps including a guest speaker);
- to plan with each Liaison at least one diocesan activity each year (prayer, a panel discussion, a breakfast) with their designated partner in dialogue;
- to encourage PEIRs to host informal gatherings in their parishes, with the support of their Pastors, to get acquainted with local clergy and plan the next activity for prayer or outreach with ecumenical and/or interreligious partners;
- to provide resources to members (articles, books, etc.);
- to provide occasional updates of conferences, meetings and national dialogues to members for the intentional transmission of information to be shared with their parishes and local community clergy associations.

2. CADEIO's Role in Diocesan Work

CADEIO's purpose is to serve as a network/professional association to encourage ecumenical and interreligious activity in Catholic arch/dioceses in the United States and to promote excellence in exchange and formation to support those whose ministry is Christian unity or growth in understanding among religions.

As the EIO is a reference provided to PEIRs, CADEIO serves the dioceses in the United States with necessary direction and the

shared experiences of best practices.

Individuals in the CADEIO network are brought together by an updated database of members organized by Regions. EIOs arrange for an annual diocesan membership of \$200.

Particularly through the CADEIO track of the annual National Workshop on Christian Unity and our annual Summer Institutes, ongoing formation/education is offered to EIOs. We hope to develop ways in which CADEIO may be effective in helping advance ongoing education among EIOs through scholarships or other forms of monetary assistance.

CADEIO's rich history and publications (when originally NADEO) are available for reference, and we hope to make all of them available in the near future through an archive online. Finally, we are developing a periodical newsletter, as well as a website which promotes communication, www.cadeio.org.

3. Resources Available

Currently, there are a number of conferences and seminars available to EIOs for their ongoing formation. The ones directly endorsed by the USCCB and organized through CADEIO are the National Workshop on Christian Unity (www.nwcu.org) and the annual 3-year cycle of continuing education, the CADEIO Institutes. The CADEIO Institutes are comprised of a 2-year course on Ecumenism (the second building on the first in discussion of more advanced ecumenical relationships) and the third year, the Interreligious Institute. Depending on the year, the Institutes rotate between St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, IL and the Collegeville Institute at St. John's College in Minnesota.

Other opportunities include an intensive program of interreligious studies focusing on the relationship between Islam and Catholicism in the summer at Georgetown

University, dialogue and scholarship with the Orientale Lumen Conferences which look at relations between Orthodox and Catholic Churches, Catholic/Evangelical conversations at Loyola University in Baltimore and the annual conferences held by the North American Academy of Ecumenists, among others. CA-DEIO members are updated regularly on such opportunities as details are received.

It is also the hope of CADEIO that we utilize our resources to develop more varied and useful regional seminars and resources for EIOs. If the number of contributing dioceses in the United States were to become more significant, perhaps we could better plan what is possible for this Association to accomplish.

Budgetary Considerations

Some bishops have expressed an interest in what sort of primitive budget might be proposed for an EIOs expenses for diocesan planning purposes. Of course, depending on region and distances which must be traveled, budget amounts may vary. It has been the experience of many EIOs that the expenses they incur in phone/postage/supplies is simply absorbed by their parish. At St. Mary we have a budget line item "ecumenical expense" which covers many of these minor expenses. A small amount of money can have a large impact in ecumenical and interreligious work. Also, if you have an active State Council of Churches, there should be additional funds included for active participation in the state board or coordinating cabinet meetings or Faith and Order meetings. This should be considered added to the amounts below, but will vary from state to state.

Large budget items would include:

Annual Summer Institute -- education		
tuition, capped at	\$ 1000.	
airfare / transportation	<u>500.</u>	1500.
National Workshop (NWCU) -- networking		
registration	175.	
CADEIO registration	120.	
extras	50.	
hotel	500.	
airfare / transportation	500.	
add'l meals/expense	<u>200.</u>	1545.
CADEIO membership	200.	
(add'l Assoc. memberships \$10. each)		
Travel/misc. for local meetings	500.	
Website hosting / year	45.	
Two mailings / year	<u>450.</u>	1195.
Total base budget		<u>\$ 4,240.</u>