



ONE IN CHRIST

# Newsletter of the Commission for promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion

## Archdiocese of Southwark

London boroughs south of the Thames, the County of Kent and the Medway Unitary Authority



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REFLECTION

SEMINAR ON RACIAL AND CULTURAL INCLUSION



*A*

*Special Edition*

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NOTICE

SOUTH EAST AREA CHRISTMAS CAROL

"When you fight Racism, Racism fight back at you."

"Stop talking about Racism. All it does is Divide! Divide! Divide!"

"Black and Asian Priests are bullied sometimes by parishioners with racist tendency but masquerade it as something else."

"It is extraordinary that we keep telling schools & parishes to be sensitive to representation, but there is no Black or Asian priest good enough to be made a Bishop in a white man's land. But we can have Asian Prime and First Ministers. Not just in the Church."

"In some Parishes, Black and Asian people are given roles of servitude. They seem not good enough to be in leadership roles in the parish."

"The Waters of Baptism is thicker than Blood."

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"We decided to talk about Racism in a White City Parish. We knew we were going to have the challenge of being seen as a racist parish because of these conversations."

"White people have been systematically formed to distrust and suspect Black people. That is the real racism. Not colour"

"In some schools, white children do not want to sit with black children. In Church, some white people do not like to share the expression of peace with black people."

Ushers should be mixed, not from one Race. They are the first people we meet in the Church; they should express diversity.

"A wise Black man will avoid close friendships with White people because they will end up seeing you as mad or unstable, or a joke to entertain them."

In some parishes, it is now reverse racism. All the Blacks or All the Asians dominate and exclude the Whites. If you speak, you are cancelled."

"Racism is not the issue today. It is the feeling of being Othered. A constant reminder in patronising ways that you are different. Where are you from? A presumption: you are not one of us. You should stay in your lane."

"As a Priest, I make an effort to pronounce the African names of the children during the First Holy Communion and Confirmation. "

"The Holy Spirit is not about Race. Racism does not exist in Heaven."

"Where is the Racism? I do not see it. I have a black nanny to care for my children, and we adore her, and I eat curry."

"Racism was created as an ideology to divide. Stop playing into this agenda of division."

"The Church is the last institution in this century where Racism is still permitted. You only have to look and you will see it is in all our structures."



# *Reflections*

Seminar on Promoting  
Racial and Cultural Inclusion  
28<sup>th</sup> October 2023  
Amigo Hall, St George's Cathedral,  
Archdiocese of Southwark







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# Episcopal Vicar for Racial and Cultural Inclusion

## Archdiocese of Southwark

### Canon Victor Darlington

#### **Seminar: Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion in our schools, parishes, and community.**

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, I warmly welcome you to this first seminar of the Commission for Promoting Racial and cultural inclusion in our Archdiocese. Seeing so many people present here today and several others following online is a great joy. Thank you all for making this time. May the Lord bless our time together as we reflect and tell the beautiful story of our Commission - our successes, challenges, and the road map for the future.

You will all notice that this seminar is at the end of October and commemorates our Black History Month celebrations. Black History Month recognises the hardship and sadness that black people have endured through slavery and systemic racism, prejudice, and stereotypes through the centuries to the present day. This is a time of fostering inclusion and integration, a time to promote oneness in our diversity where all are welcome and acknowledged and see that there is always space for one more.

Our Commission is still relatively new; we were formally created as a commission by Archbishop John in January 2021, the weekend of Racial Justice Sunday. Our journey towards becoming a commission started in 2020, soon after the killing of George Floyd on May 25th, 2020. A man, a life created in the image and likeness of God, was brutally murdered by a police officer on camera while other police officers looked on. As we all can recall, this killing sparked worldwide protests and racial tensions. Sad as the situation was, it brought out once again the oneness of our humanity. Evil and injustice against a fellow human being anywhere is wrong. People of all faiths and religions spoke out against this killing; people of all colours, young and old, called out this evil of racism.

This became an awakening call, yet another the Kairos moment for our society, government, churches, and institutions to take a closer look at their structures and to identify and challenge racism where it exists.

Our Archdiocese was not left out; Archbishop John took the ugly bull by its horn and was ready to address and challenge this big elephant in the house. He asked me to schedule a Zoom meeting with diverse young people from our different schools around Camberwell. This meeting was meant to be for about an hour, without us knowing what to expect. Lo and behold, the meeting went on for nearly 3 hours. Archbishop John asked each participant if they had experienced racism- after a silence pause, these young people opened up and spoke of their individual experiences of racism. Racism was, sadly, something they all had experienced. Archbishop John was shocked and saddened by the harrowing testimonies of these young children. Soon after, he decided with his auxiliary bishops that our Archdiocese needed to act and show in no uncertain terms that there is no place for racism in our Archdiocese, our schools, and our parishes. A letter was sent out to all our catholic schools and parishes challenging the evil of racism and reiterating our call to love and live as brothers and sisters, welcoming and showing respect for diversity.



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Soon after, I was appointed the EV for promoting racial and cultural inclusion to lead the team that will take this message of inclusion and love to all our schools and parishes. I worked alongside the Education Commission to run online seminars for headteachers, teachers and governors of our schools to address the evil of racism, and schools were encouraged to review their different structures to manage reports and issues relating to racism. The response from schools has been very encouraging. I have enjoyed visiting several schools this past year and seeing what they are doing to promote diversity, love and respect for all and the stress on our oneness in Christ.

I like to particularly thank members of the Commission for promoting racial and cultural inclusion of our Archdiocese, for their hard work and dedicated commitment towards the realisation of our goals and vision these past two years. Without them, we will not be here today. With the help of members of the Commission, we have reached out to people in our parishes and all our priests, in a survey to ascertain where we are as a diverse community, in view of promoting love and respect for all, and calling out racism where it exists.

With the support and hard work of members of the Commission, we have celebrated two racial justice Sundays at St Georges cathedral, with Archbishop John presiding and stressing repeatedly that we are brothers and sisters in Christ and each of these celebrations brought together people from diverse cultural backgrounds in the celebration of our oneness in Christ with our respective cultural identities.

The Commission is now reaching out to parishes, encouraging them to create parish hubs to promote cultural diversity, to celebrate parish intercultural days, to be welcoming to everyone, and to create prayer spaces in the church or within the parish grounds where and if possible, to accommodate a greater diversity of religious images or statues in place of all-white depictions of Jesus, Mary, and other saints. St Margaret of Scotland Parish, Carshalton Beeches has done very well with a good model of a parish hub workplace.

Looking ahead, as a commission we shall continue to engage positively and constructively with our different parishes and schools, to speak out against the evil of racism. As we do this, we remind everyone in our Archdiocese, that we are a diverse people, united by our faith in Jesus, and we equally stress that fundamental truth that the waters of baptism make us brothers and sisters in Christ, created in the image and likeness of God, and our Christian vocation obliges us to love and respect all, everyone, and any.

As a commission we shall endeavour to continue to promote the message of love and unity in diversity in our schools, and parishes, stressing that humanity is one race, and therefore upholding the dignity of everyone in our schools and parishes and communities is a necessity. We are encouraging parishes and raising the awareness that they ensure that their structures and systems are fair and just for everyone. For example, the leadership roles and ministries within any given parish, should truly reflect the racial profile of that parish. That different racial groups are encouraged to join the different associations within the parish and are equally represented in the ministry of lectors, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, parish pastoral council, school governors, etc.

As a commission our aim is not to accuse people of racism, neither do we go about fighting in protest causing harm and destruction, all in the name of fighting racism. Instead, we are committed to continually promote a message of dialogue with opposing views in view of strengthening our fraternity, even as we engage with the experiences of people affected by racism. Keeping silent in the face of racism is not the right way either, as a commission we shall continue to encourage all to speak out against the evil of racism, and we will equally listen and support anyone who reports such cases of racism and discrimination.





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The diversity of our Archdiocese is something I am immensely proud of, it stresses respect for difference, and to be different is to be considered beautiful. St Paul tells the Galatians in 3:26-28, that we are all sons and daughters of God through faith. There is no Jew or Greek, or slave or free, no male or female, for all are one in Christ.

It is my hope that as a commission, we shall continue to strengthen the foundation of these past two years, as we move things forward. We shall continually listen to the voices of our young ones and their experiences, the anguish, and the cry of the oppressed, all this in view of creating an enabling environment for proper integration of everyone in our parishes and schools, where no one is judged on the colour of his or her skin.

I believe all those following online or physically present here, today will be inspired and motivated by what we do as a commission and I invite you all to join us in this mission of spreading this message of love and oneness even in our diversity. Let us be the ambassadors of Christ, called to live in love and to promote love for all in our parishes, our schools, and our communities. Every one of us, priests, religious, and laity are called to be drivers of this message of love and change so needed in our communities, we cannot afford to be onlookers. Racism betrays this understanding of Christian love.

Our Archdiocese in its diversity brings together different nationalities and ethnicities from all over the world. Herein lies our strength as we work together fostering love and unity in celebrating these different cultures and the beauty that comes with them, stressing our cultural identity and our union with all those around us.

May God bless our gathering today and may the tiny seed he has sown in our Archdiocese (the Commission for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion) continue to grow and bear fruits in the hearts of us all – fruits that will last. Amen.







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# Speakers

## **Fr Richard Nesbitt**

Fr Richard is the Parish Priest of Our Lady of Fatima in White City, West London in Westminster Diocese. He was ordained in 2007 and has served in a number of parishes in his diocese, as well as being the Westminster Vocations Director for 6 years. In 2020 following the George Floyd killing in America and the pulling down of the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol, he initiated a conversation in his parish which led to parishioners sharing their experiences of racism and suggestions for ending racism in the parish and wider society. This has been published in a report called 'Rooting out racism in our Parish'. In this report he says

“As a parish priest I feel very passionately that we should always have the courage and integrity to bring into our shared community conversations about the ‘difficult issues’ which surround us in our world today - this makes our faith real and not something comfortable and cosy”.

## **Elizabeth Uwalaka**

Elizabeth Uwalaka and her family have been parishioners of Our Lady of Fatima for over 50 years. A prolific poet, singer-songwriter, catechist and fully-qualified languages teacher, Elizabeth is Pilgrimage Administrator for the Diocese of Westminster. Elizabeth is also a Foundation Governor and Chair of Governors at St John XXIII Catholic Primary School in White City. Elizabeth is currently a member of the interdepartmental Racial Justice, Equality and Diversity Group at both Vaughan House and the Westminster Education Service.

Elizabeth has been a core member of the group of parishioners at Our Lady of Fatima who have worked together to identify and tackle racism in the parish. Elizabeth writes in their report:

“We are united through Baptism to love and serve God, and to live this mission in our own lives, in our Church and in our society. The racial issues and inequalities, identified locally, nationally and internationally in 2020 – and shared so frankly by Our Lady of Fátima parishioners - had the potential to derail this mission, as differences can breed division and discord. But the journey of sharing and healing which our parish anti-racism group has travelled together since last summer shows that God can bring light out of any darkness”.

## **Susan Elderfield**

Susan is married to Deacon Javier. They have five children and live in South East London. She is the Advisor for School and College Chaplaincy in the Archdiocese of Southwark Education Commission and Programme Convenor for the Chaplaincy and Youth Ministry Apprenticeship at St Mary's University. She has the privilege of supporting Chaplains who believe deeply about their role and responsibility to develop the Catholic life and Mission of their schools.

After enjoying an extensive career in teaching, she turned her attention to school Chaplaincy to engage young people in faith formation and spiritual accompaniment. As a member of the Commission, Susan led the first Headteachers Conference on 'No Place for Racism' and alongside her colleague, delivers in-service training for Schools and Colleges in Southwark and Westminster Diocese on Equality, Diversity, Dignity and Inclusion.





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# Speakers

## **Nana Churcher**

Nana Churcher is an award-winning international Talk Show Host, speaker, radio host, author, mentor, executive producer, and philanthropist. She is a parishioner at the Catholic parish of Lady of Mount Carmel and St. George in Enfield.

Nana is the recipient of Women Worship Gospel Music Awards: Best Female Author of year 2023 and Best Female TV/Online Presenter of the year 2023. Nana is best known for her talk show, 'The Nana Churcher Show' which streams live on Omega TV UK every Sunday at 2pm. It is a one-hour motivational show which seeks to inspire its viewers to become leaders in their chosen fields of speciality and also empowers them to become agents of change. Nana has conducted interviews on international platforms such as Oscars, Grammy's, Bet Awards Essence Festival and many more.

Nana authored her first best seller book: 'The Power Of Your Words' a self-help book for people to be mindful of their choices of words on themselves or others. She has also been recognised by the city of Long Beach (California) for her philanthropical work with the Attitude of Gratitude group. Her catchphrase "You belong at the TOP" seeks the best in others.

Nana resides in the UK with her husband Pastor Alfred Churcher and 4 beautiful children.

## **Andrea Fernandes**

Andrea grew up in Mumbai, India. Her parents instilled in her a keen sense and need to ensure that whatever she did had to be in the service of God and all His people.

Growing up she was part of the Legion of Mary, contributed to the Parish youth movement, was a Confirmation Catechist – a role she continued when she moved to the UK.

Andrea is now the Parish Safeguarding Representative for St. Margaret of Scotland RC Church, and Co-Chair of the newly set up Parish Racial and Cultural Inclusion Group.

In addition to service through the Church, Andrea is a physiotherapist and in 2006, was awarded the Commonwealth Scholarship. This enabled her to travel to the UK for a MSc in Neurological Rehabilitation in Sheffield.

She has served in the NHS for 15 years, first as a physiotherapist and then for the last 10 year in operational and corporate NHS management roles. She now leads the performance and planning function as part of recovery of NHS performance and backlog in waiting lists.

Andrea is married with two children, and with God's help and guidance works to inspire in her children and in everyone she is blessed to interact with, through action and words the same values of love and of the fear of God and service to all His people.









**Canon Victor Darlington, Episcopal Vicar for the South East**  
warmly invites you to the:

# **Christmas Carol Service**

**Of the South East Pastoral Area, Archdiocese of Southwark**

*for all the*  
**Parishes in the deaneries of Bexley; Bromley; Camberwell; Greenwich; Lambeth and Lewisham**

**Date:**

**Sunday 17th December 2023**

Gaudete Sunday

**Time:**

**7.30pm**

Gathering from 7pm

Clergy to vest in Cassock & Surplice or Alb & Stole from 7.15pm

**Venue:**

**Corpus Christi Catholic Church, Brixton Hill**  
**11 Trent Road, London, SW2 5BJ**

**Theme:**

*Peace on Earth*

**Principal Celebrant:**

**The Right Reverend Philip Moger**

Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Southwark



## The Team:

### Episcopal Vicar for the Commission:

- Canon Victor Darlington

### Administrative Assistant:

- Hipo Eze

### Sub Committees:

#### RoadMap for Parishes Racial Justice and Cultural Inclusion Commission Hubs:

- Deacon Alfred Banya (Coordinator)
- Hipo Eze
- John Siraut

### Events Planners:

- Jude Onye (Coordinator)
- Nana Anto-Awuakye
- Robert Emejuru
- Delia Jameson
- Paul Cavadino
- Zoe Ramsammy

### Chaplaincy Engagements:

- Jenifer Da Silva (Coordinator)
- Fr Patrick D'Souza
- Fr Fernandes Feroz
- Marlon Andino

### Newsletter Editor:

- Fr Valentine Erhahon

## Contact us:

### CANON VICTOR DARLINGTON EPISCOPAL VICAR



Park House,  
6A Creswell Park, Blackheath, SE3 9RD

#### Emails:

[racialjusticecommission@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:racialjusticecommission@rcaos.org.uk)

[hipoeze@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:hipoeze@rcaos.org.uk)

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark  
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A heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped out in any way to make the **28/11/2023 Seminar** a great success. May the Lord bless you.

Canon Victor