News



Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, La., speaks June 14 during the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' annual spring assembly in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (CNS/Bob Roller)



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A planned pastoral letter addressing racism is on schedule for a November vote by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Bishop Shelton Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, chairman of the bishop's Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism*, said during the bishops' spring general assembly June 14 that the document would reflect recommendations from the various audiences that have reviewed drafts of the document.

The bishop said the document will focus on contemporary concerns affecting Native Americans and African-Americans and the "targeting" of Hispanics with racist language and actions.

Among its components, he added, the document will:

-- Reflect "grave concerns for the rise in racist expressions" in American society, public discourse and social media.

-- Address ways racism affects institutions and public policy.

-- Condemn racism and raise awareness of its impact "on all of us."

-- Assist pastors, educators, families and individuals in confronting racism.

-- Encourage honest self-reflection.

He added that recommendations that the document be "not too long" will be followed.

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The pastoral letter will be rooted in the clear message of Micah 6:8, which calls on the faithful "to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God," the bishop said.

Plans are being developed to implement the document in dioceses and parishes so that people witness "the healing hand of God through it," Fabre said.

After the report, retired Bishop Michael Pfeifer of San Angelo, Texas, suggest that the committee incorporate listening sessions in schools beginning this fall so that young people are "aware of this critical issue."

When it comes to implementation of the pastoral letter, Pfeifer stressed, "we want people to read it," urging that supporting documents that summarize its content be prepared and distributed for families and individuals.

**The name of the committee has been corrected*