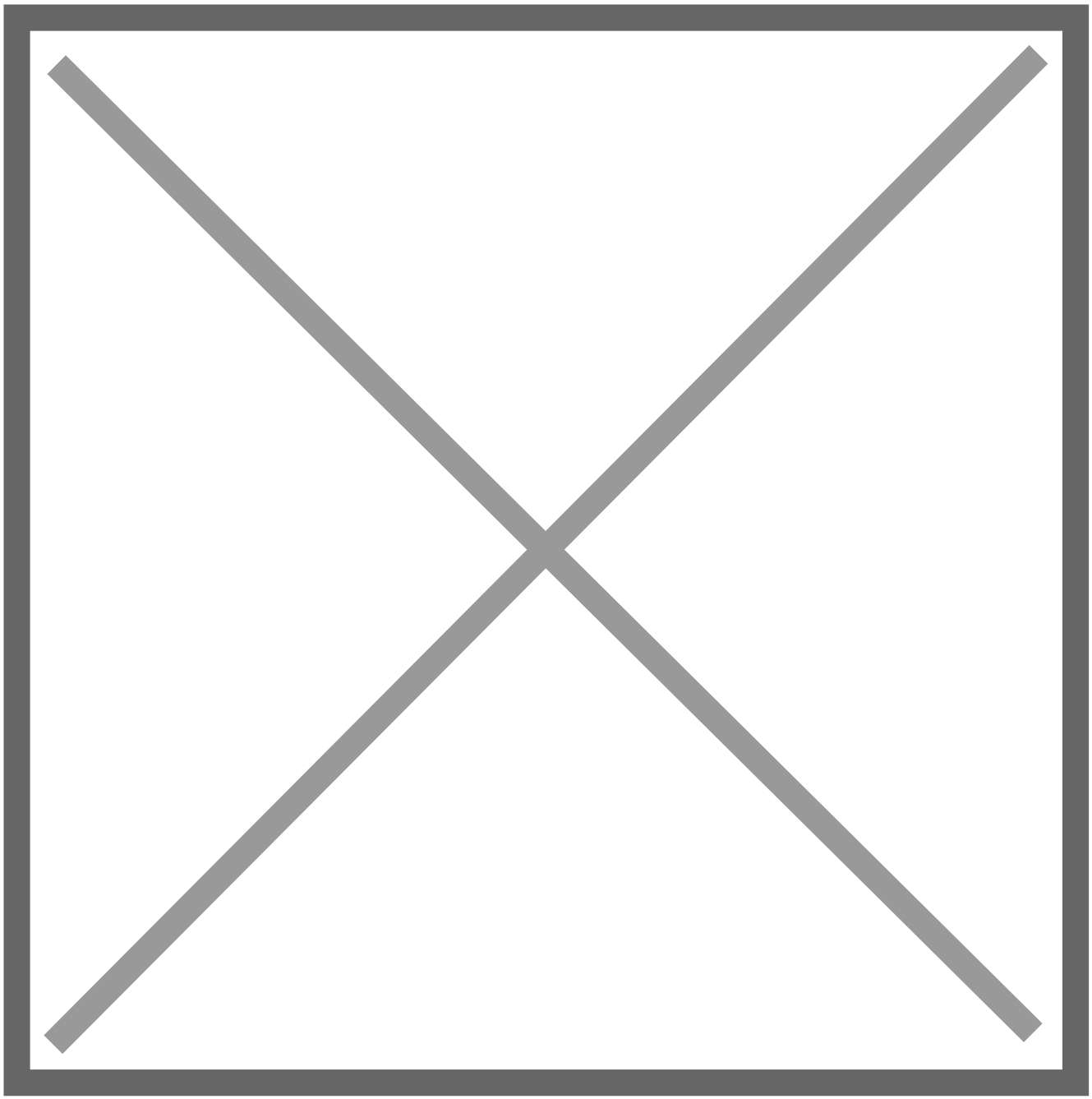
News



Marchers in Seattle walk by a mural of Bruce Lee and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar March 13, 2021, during a protest against anti-Asian hate crimes. (CNS/Reuters/Lindsey Wasson)



by Catholic News Service

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Seattle Archbishop Paul D. Etienne has formed a Racial Justice and Cultural Diversity Commission to guide the archdiocese on issues and initiatives "concerning intercultural competency and the sin of racism."

"As members of the body of Christ, we must continue to break down prevailing attitudes and any expressions of racism — both in the church and in our communities," Etienne said in a May 6 news release announcing the 13-member commission.

"We will confront racism and injustice directly so that healing can occur. As Catholics, we are called to transform our institutions and society into one that respects the dignity and rights of all people," he said.

He named 13 Catholics of various races and ethnicities as members of the commission. They hail from parishes across the 19-county archdiocese in western Washington and include lay Catholics, clergy and a Religious Sister of Mercy.

The archdiocese said the commission's focus will be ongoing reform, but it will begin its work with three key initiatives:

- Terminology: It will support the development of common terms and definitions "around belonging, dignity and justice to create a foundation for all archdiocesan efforts."
- Standards of behavior: It will advise on appropriate standards of behavior for all employees that "uplift belonging, dignity and justice."
- Intercultural training: It will audit current training offerings and make recommendations for a standard intercultural training program for all archdiocesan employees, including those at schools and parishes.

The commission also aims to create awareness of the issues facing people today; "educate ourselves and our communities"; accompany those impacted by racism; and develop a toolkit for parishes and schools.

"Educating employees about racism and elevating racial justice is important so that we can bring Christ's love to everyone and model it for everyone in our communities," said Etienne. "In addition to education and reform efforts, it is also very important that we recognize and celebrate the diversity in our communities, since we are one body of Christ."

Updates on the commission's work will be posted in a special section of the archdiocesan website. The site has links to the English- and Spanish-language versions of the U.S. bishops' 2018 document "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love — A Pastoral Letter Against Racism." Also posted are links to the study guides for the pastoral.

"The vision for this group is to foster a church where racism is not accepted," the website says.

Etienne also named the archdiocesan directors of the Office of Pastoral Ministries and of Multicultural Ministries and the assistant superintendent of Catholic schools to be lead staff for the commission. The archdiocese's chief human resources officer and the director for young adult ministry will be support staff.

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