

# Press Release



Diocese of Charlotte  
1123 South Church St.  
Charlotte, NC 28203

Contact: David Hains  
Phone: (704)370.3336

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## **Dioceses withdraw from NC Council of Churches**

Effective December 31, 2013, the Catholic Diocese of Charlotte and the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh will conclude their official membership in the North Carolina Council of Churches. This decision follows an extensive series of discussions by both dioceses with the leadership of the North Carolina Council of Churches regarding its administrative structure and its by-laws. This has resulted in religious leaders being associated, via the Council, with positions that are at times in contradiction with their practice and the teaching of their faith.

In an effort to continue to actively participate in ecumenical dialogue and the important community activities where possible, both Catholic Dioceses proposed to the Council a new type of organizational membership, which would allow both dioceses to remain in direct and active participation with the Council through a proposed observer status. The Council did not approve this proposal.

The Diocese of Raleigh and the Diocese of Charlotte deeply value the long standing relationship with the North Carolina Council of Churches and have informed the Council of their strong desire to continue to work together on issues where there is substantial agreement. Such issues include the implementation of comprehensive immigration reform, securing just wages for all employees, addressing the root causes of poverty and hunger, eradicating all forms of prejudice and bias and seeking the end of the death penalty. While working with the administrative structure of the Council is not possible, collaboration on these and other important issues with religious leaders throughout our State will continue. The funding paid to the Council for membership will now be redirected to support these essential initiatives.

In so doing, the Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Raleigh and the Most Reverend Peter J. Jugis, Bishop of Charlotte will continue to embrace every future opportunity possible to stand side by side with religious leaders throughout our great State to address those issues which impact our community and with which we can speak as one voice, symbolizing the unity that is ours as members of God's holy family.

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