

Rabbi Dennis C. Sasso, D. Min.

Dr. Dennis C. Sasso is Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck, Indianapolis, Indiana, where he has served as spiritual leader since 1977. He is a native of the Republic of Panama, and a descendant of Sephardic (Spanish-Portuguese Jewish) families who settled in the Caribbean during the 17th century.

Rabbi Sasso earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University. He holds a Master of Arts in Religion from Temple University, Philadelphia, and was ordained by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia. Rabbi Sasso has also studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and did his doctoral studies at Temple University and at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana, where he obtained his Doctor of Ministry degree. Rabbi Sasso is the recipient of Doctor of Divinity degrees, *Honoris Causa*, from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (Philadelphia, PA), the Jewish Theological Seminary (New York, NY) and Christian Theological Seminary (Indianapolis, IN).

Rabbi Sasso is a member of various scholarly and rabbinic societies, and has served on numerous interfaith, civic and community boards and agencies. He is Past President of the Indianapolis Board of Rabbis and of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association. A Past-President of the Indiana Interreligious Commission on Human Equality, and Co-Chairman of the Race Relations Leadership Network, Rabbi Sasso was the Co-Chairman of the Citizens Complaint Working Group, a blue-ribbon committee appointed by the Mayor to review and make recommendations to upgrade the Ordinance that regulates the Civilian Police Review Process and he has served on the Mayor's Community Crime Prevention Task Force. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Hispanic Center and on the Board of the Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis. Rabbi Sasso currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Lake Family Institute for Faith and Giving of the IUPUI Center on Philanthropy, the Indianapolis Immigrant Welcome Center and on the United Way of Central Indiana Public Policy Subcommittee, the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee, the Public Safety Clergy Committee and the Center for Interfaith Cooperation. Rabbi Sasso is a member of the Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School Board of Advisors, Identity and Education Committees.

Rabbi Sasso writes a monthly column in the Op-Ed page of *The Indianapolis Star*. He served on the Advisory Board of The Reconstructionist, a Journal of Contemporary Jewish Thought and Practice. He is an Affiliate Professor of Jewish Studies at Christian Theological Seminary and an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Theology at Marian University. Rabbi Sasso has taught at Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis and at Butler University.

Rabbi Sasso has lectured widely and published scholarly and popular articles on Caribbean Jewry, Reconstructionist Judaism, Interfaith issues, the Jewish family, the life cycle, ethics, spirituality and liturgy. He was decorated as a "Sagamore of the Wabash," a distinguished citizen award presented by the Governor of the State of Indiana. He is the recipient of the "Community Service Award" from the NAACP, and the "Fostering

Life” Award of the Indianapolis Chapter of LINKS in recognition of his leadership in Interfaith and Interracial relations. Rabbi Sasso is the recipient of the Rabbi Ira Eisenstein Award for Distinguished Rabbinic Service by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association. Rabbis Sandy and Dennis Sasso were honored in 2014 by the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites by designating “The Sandy and Dennis Sasso Jewish Heritage Collection” as part of the Museum’s exhibit.