

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC CHAPLAINS

Audio Conferences
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Ecumenism and Interreligious Relationships Based on Vatican Council Documents

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SESSION TWO: Points on Interreligious Dialogue

1. My own introduction to interreligious dialogue through the InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington.
2. Interreligious dialogue differs from ecumenism.
3. The document **Nostra Aetate** [*Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*] of the Second Vatican Council—led the way to fostering interreligious dialogue [Also see paragraph #16 of the Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* for its comments on Jews and Muslims.].
 - a. “...the Catholic Church rejects nothing of which is true and holy in these religions. It has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from its own teaching, nevertheless often reflects a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women.”
 - b. Blessed John Paul II—a summons to **peace**
 - c. Truth found in other religions is a preparation for the Gospel
 - d. The *Declaration on Religious Liberty* of the Council calls us to respect the free choices of others and thus never to use coercion or aggressive tactics to ‘convert’ others
4. **Catholic-Jewish**—Vatican II’s clear condemnation of any prejudice against the Jews, its affirmation of the continuing validity of God’s covenant with the Jews, and its recognition of the innocence of the Jews as a people for the death of Jesus opened up the dialogue.
 - a. Jews are not collectively responsible for the death of Jesus;
 - b. God’s covenant with the Jewish people remains valid;
 - c. Jews are not to be spoken of as abandoned or forsaken by God;
 - d. Christianity has no place for anti-Semitism or anti-Judaism
5. Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in 1991—**four forms of dialogue**
 - a. Dialogue of Life
 - b. Dialogue of Action
 - c. Dialogue of Theological Exchange
 - d. Dialogue of Religious Experience

6. Blessed JP II in *Redemptoris Missio* [1990] while insisting on the universal presence of the Holy Spirit, held this does not mean that “all religions are equal” but that all religions bear the impulse of the Holy Spirit, most fully found in the Catholic tradition.—Thus we are not holding that all religions are the same.
7. Pope Paul VI—expresses in his encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* of 1964 **basic qualities of dialogue**
 - a. Clarity
 - b. Meekness—not proud nor offensive but honest and charitable, patient and generous
 - c. Trust
 - d. Pedagogical Prudence—adapt our presentation to the sensitivities of the hearer so that we can communicate effectively
 - e. We note that people can respect each other and disagree. Each person in dialogue presumes that his/her religion is true
8. Worship—respect for the integrity of one another.
9. The outcome is mutual understanding and the common good—we are not here talking about ‘my values and your values’ and thus entering into relativism but rather searching for the truth together, a process which we believe will lead us toward those things that make for human flourishing.