



YEAR OF FAITH²⁰¹²₂₀₁₃

LIVING OUR *Relationship* WITH JESUS CHRIST



"Man's relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: "He who does not love does not know God" (1 John 4:8)"

(*Nostra Aetate*, 5)

10/2013

Vatican II | What Difference Does it Make?

NOSTRA AETATE
Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions

Catholics today are very aware of the many different religious belief of the people around them. What should be their attitude to these religions and those who believe in them? The Bishops at the Second Vatican Council offer us guidance to answer this important question. First, they make the observation that all human beings are looking for answers to basic question of life: why am I here, how am I to live, what is the meaning of suffering and death, and how am I connected to everything that is around me. Secondly, through human history, different religions have come to be and have offered their answers to these questions.

Thirdly, while the bishops invited Catholics to share their faith in Jesus Christ, they also encouraged us to understand what others believe about God and life. Since God is the creator of all human beings and wants to save all human beings, each living soul is in a dialogue with God in his/her heart. So while the Catholic Church does not agree with everything these religions teach, the Catholic Church recognizes that we need to respect whatever is good and true that is found in them. Catholics should approach with respect all human beings and realize that they

like we look upon their religion as part of their identity and dignity as a human being. The way of a respectful conversation with others is the only way to truly share the Good News which begins with acknowledging that all of us are made in the image and likeness of God.

And finally, we need to realize that there are many ways people of different religions can collaborate for the improvement of a neighborhood, region or nation. Catholics should look upon Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and Jews not as enemies but as fellow human beings, who struggle with many of the same questions and sufferings of life. This is the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and it is a key to a peaceful world.

What difference does it make?

Some would like to blame religion for the hate and violence of the world. The Catholic Church calls all its members to work to understand and work together with believers of the world's religions so that the people see religion as an instrument of dialogue and collaboration among human beings.

Rev. Joseph Hilinski

Reflection Questions

1. How does the belief that God is the creator and the final goal of all human beings frame the teaching about world religions?
2. How does religious dialogue differ from compromise?
3. What does the very suggestion of collaboration among people of different religions suggest about the work of the Holy Spirit?

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