

Relationships with Friends / Families of Other Faiths

Objective: In our family and social circles, we often have close, or not so close, relationships with individuals of other faiths. In some cases, those individuals have no faith at all. Knowing that all of us are God's children, how do we best nurture those relationships as Catholics?

Let's examine how we are performing as Catholics in our relationships, striving to live as examples of Christ. It is incumbent on us to humbly, yet confidently, engage at spiritual level, when possible, in those relationships. It is the responsibility of each of us as practicing Catholics to be properly Catechized, to know our faith. We should be prepared to defend the faith when necessary in word and action with respect and humility.

As Catholics, we should strive to live the same way Jesus did. No matter what we do, everything should come from the intention of showing others Jesus: His love, His mercy, His grace, His freedom

Do we do that? ...At work? At family celebrations? At social gatherings? At sporting events? Should we not strive to be "found guilty" of being a Catholic by all our family and friends?

Song Suggestion: Prayer of St Francis (Blue 368, Red 721) / They Will Know We Are Christians By our Love (Blue 476; Red 728)

Bible Readings and Catechism

1 Peter 3:15

Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope.

Mark 16-15

Jesus states – And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Matthew 28:19

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Catechism 905

Lay people also fulfill their prophetic mission by evangelization, "that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life." For lay people, "this evangelization . . . acquires a specific property and peculiar efficacy because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world."

Saint: St. John Paul II

To promote greater understanding between nations and between religions, he undertook numerous trips abroad, campaigning against political oppression and criticizing materialism. He also issued several unprecedented apologies to groups that had been wronged by Catholics, most notably Jews and Muslims. His emphasis on nonviolent political activism ultimately contributed to the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. More generally, John Paul used his influence among Catholics and throughout the world to advance the recognition of human dignity and to deter the use of violence.

Vignette: – Tim's gathering of family and friends was in a partying mood as dinner was ready to be served for the large crowd. It was a bit awkward, but he got everyone's attention, suggested they hold hands, and he

led a thoughtful prayer of thanks before eating. Later on, Tim was in a group conversation where one of the participants was boasting that they stopped attending church ever since the priest abuse scandal. It took some courage, but Tim found a way to share how rich his faith had become since he, around the time of the same priest scandal, started critically examining his own faith life. It was then that he discovered the Catechism of the Catholic church and was enlightened with the truth in its message, and the beauty in its rich traditions.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

How do you demonstrate your Catholic faith in a group of people with mixed religious beliefs?

Are you perceived by your non-Catholic (or Catholic) friends as a Scribe or a Pharisee, or as a Good Samaritan?

How would you rate yourself on your knowledge of the Catholic faith?

Have you taken the time to read the Catechism at more than a cursory level?

Have you educated yourself on the beliefs and practices of other religions so you can knowledgeably and sensitively engage in a conversation about faith?

Is there someone in your family that feels separated when spiritual topics come up in conversation? How can and should you handle that?

Resources:

Apologetics Primer by John Martignoni in Catholic Answers

<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/apologetics-primer>

Action Plan:

Consider improving your knowledge of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Look into Fr. Mike Schmitz Catechism in a Year podcast or sign up for a daily email with Catechism in a Year from Flocknotes

Have a conversation on a spiritual topic with friends. Be able to share and explain the Catholic position.

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