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Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 23, Folder 3, Guidelines for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, 1976.



ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

1531 WEST NINTH STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015

DUnkirk 8-8101

COMMISSION ON ECUMENICAL  
AND INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum  
American Jewish Committee  
165 East 56th Street  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum,

On behalf of Cardinal Timothy Manning and our Archdiocesan Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, may I make the enclosed guidelines available to you.

The cover letter in these guidelines from the Commission indicates several important concepts which I believe are critical:

- 1) These are Pastoral guidelines (not theological)
- 2) They have a specific sacramental perspective
- 3) They are working guidelines, encouraging refinement and future development

With the rather unique configuration of the Los Angeles religious scene you will notice a rather extensive section in connection with Interreligious Dialogue. This, we hope, will be useful here in Los Angeles.

It was felt that you personally might be interested in these guidelines within which the Roman Catholic community operates. Perhaps selected additional religious leaders within your faith community might be interested in these guidelines. Please feel free to contact me, or the Executive Secretary of our Commission if additional copies would be helpful.

Rev. Michael A. Nolin, S.A.  
Executive Secretary  
14341 Fairgrove Ave.  
La Puente, CA 91746

With personal best wishes.

Sincerely,

(Rev.) Royale M. Vadakin

Chairman, Archdiocesan Commission on  
Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

# **GUIDELINES FOR ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS**



**ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE  
of  
LOS ANGELES**

GUIDELINES FOR ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS



September 1, 1976



ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

1531 WEST NINTH STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015

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September 1st, 1976

Reverend and dear Father:

The implementation of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council in the Church of Los Angeles remains an overriding pastoral concern. A major theme which runs throughout the documents is authentic ecumenical life. The Decree on Ecumenism and the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions contain the ecumenical and interfaith principles of the Universal Church. Additional guidelines are to be found in the Directory issued by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. Guidelines issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, also enunciated guiding principles.

The document, Ecumenical Collaboration at the Regional, National and Local Levels, issued by the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, resulted in a request to the Archdiocesan Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs to update Guidelines on Ecumenism which have been the official diocesan guidelines since 1967.

We are happy to promulgate officially these updated guidelines to the priests, religious and laity of the Archdiocese. Developed by the Commission, they express the authentic statements of the Universal Church and touch the unique pastoral needs of this Archdiocese.

May these guidelines assist the clergy and people of the Archdiocese to strengthen the ministry of ecumenical and interfaith life which has been so rich and strong in the history of the Church in Los Angeles.

With every best wish, I am

Very sincerely yours,

*Timothy Cardinal Manning*

Timothy Cardinal Manning  
Archbishop of Los Angeles





ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

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COMMISSION ON ECUMENICAL  
AND INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS: PRIESTS, RELIGIOUS AND LAITY OF  
THE CHURCH AT LOS ANGELES

The Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity was charged with the responsibility of developing ecumenical policy based on the Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism. The Secretariat maintains that it is advisable to have in dioceses an ecumenical commission charged with the responsibility of promoting Christian Unity. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has had the benefits of such a Commission for a number of years. Some of the responsibilities of the Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs are: to foster public and private prayer for Christian unity; to promote relations between Catholics and other Christians; to initiate local dialogue; to promote joint witness to the Christian faith by cooperation in education, morality and cultural matters; and to develop an ecumenical awareness among Catholic clergy and laity.

In light of these concerns, and in reply to Cardinal Manning's request, we have prepared this set of guidelines for the Church at Los Angeles. They are neither definitive nor exhaustive; we present them with the hope that they will be convincing witness that the attainment of union is the concern of the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike. (Decree on Ecumenism, 6.)

We also would like to share with you the following principles which have guided us in developing these guidelines:

1. These guidelines are precisely that--guidelines; they are not a complete theological presentation of the scope of ecumenical and interfaith life. They are pastoral rather than academic.
2. In order to be practically pastoral, they deal in specific detail with the sacramental life of the Church. We have considered specifically the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist and Marriage.
3. These guidelines are not a final document; they are working guidelines.
4. These guidelines are being sent to Bishops and denominational leaders of Christian churches and World Religions present here in Los Angeles. In a spirit of mutual trust and cooperation we are most anxious that the guidelines be fully known by those with whom we work in a spirit of unity and diversity.

5. For priests, religious and laity we have listed ecumenical and interfaith agencies and persons, so that you may make direct contact with local religious leaders in connection with pastoral and educational concerns. For those of other faith communities, we have listed Catholic agencies for the same purpose.
6. These guidelines are produced in such a way as to allow easy insertion of additional material as developments occur in ecumenical and interfaith life.

As a Commission we offer our services in the following ways:

1. to consult on specific questions not covered in the guidelines;
2. to assist in personal contact with clergy and leaders of other faith communities;
3. to speak individually, or in a small group, to parish organizations concerning ecumenical and interfaith topics.

We have listed the individual members of the Commission in the final section of these guidelines. Since the Commission consists of individuals with specific areas of expertise, it will be advisable and practical to initially contact the Commission Chairman or Executive Secretary for any of the above mentioned services.

With personal best wishes,

Sincerely,

Archdiocesan Commission on  
Ecumenical and Interreligious  
Affairs.



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## ECUMENICAL GUIDELINES

### INTRODUCTION

1. The restoration of unity among all Christians was one of the main concerns of the Second Vatican Council. The division among Christians openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature. (Decree on Ecumenism, 1.) The primary goal of ecumenism is to foster unity among all Christians so that the one Body of Christ may be a visible sign of salvation for all men.

2. This concern for unity has been manifest in the Los Angeles area in many ways; one of the most promising has been formal and informal dialogues. The Los Angeles Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue and the Los Angeles Lutheran/Roman Catholic dialogue are on-going formal dialogues which demonstrate the Archdiocesan concern for the attainment of union. These dialogues encourage rather than preclude the initiation of similar dialogues and cooperation among clergy and lay people of Catholic parishes with Anglican, Lutheran and other Protestant congregations. The priests of the Archdiocese are encouraged to participate in the informal dialogue of ministerial associations.

3. Although the Archdiocese is not a member of the Southern California Council of Churches, a denominational council which often cooperates with, though independent of, the National Council of Churches, the Archdiocese does often work with this group. Catholic parishes and priests may take out memberships in interfaith councils of Protestant and Jewish congregations and local Council of Churches. The nature and goals of these Councils should be reviewed carefully before seeking membership. The Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs can assist in this review.



## PRAYER AMONG CHRISTIANS

4. The soul of the whole ecumenical movement is public and private prayer for the unity of Christians. (Decree on Ecumenism, 6.) Catholics are encouraged to join with other Christians in praying for unity. The Eucharist, which is the summit of Catholic prayer, is often the only service that Catholics feel they may offer for services of joint Christians worship. In fact, other Catholic forms--for example, the liturgy of the hours and the service of the Word--may be more conducive to joint worship with other Christians than is Eucharist. A sample service is contained in the appendix.

## SPECIAL OCCASIONS

5. The following occasions are especially recommended for joint prayer for unity:

- a. The week of January 18 to 25, called the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.
- b. Thanksgiving, when Americans join with one another in giving thanks for the many blessings bestowed on this land.
- c. The days from Ascension to Pentecost, when the community at Jerusalem waited and prayed for the coming of the Holy Spirit to confirm them in unity and universal mission.
- d. Epiphany, when we honor the presence of Christ manifest to the world.
- e. Good Friday Services.

6. All prayers for unity should be consonant with Christ's prayer: that they all may be one. When Catholic clergy and laity join other Christian people and clergy in common prayer, it is suggested that the prayer should be particularly concerned with the restoration of unity; such themes as Baptism and the renewal of personal and social life are especially appropriate. (Directory, 34.)



7. Pastors and priests, as leaders of the local worshiping communities, should encourage their congregations in common prayer for Christian unity. Public prayers for Christian unity should also be encouraged at Mass (e.g. during the Prayer of the Faithful).

8. Catholic Charismatic prayer groups and communities engage frequently in prayer for the unity which the Apostle Paul tells us has the Spirit as its origin. Prayer of this type can be an effective means of petitioning for the grace of unity.

#### JOINT PRAYER AND THE EUCHARIST

9. When non-Catholic ministers are invited to a Catholic church for common prayer such as a Bible Service, they are welcome to proclaim the various readings and deliver the sermon. If they are invited to be present for Mass, they should be given a proper place in the sanctuary, welcomed at the introduction, and mentioned in the Prayer of the Faithful and the Homily. However, a separated brother or sister is not to act as a Scripture reader or to preach during the celebration of the Eucharist. The same is to be said of a Catholic at the celebration of the Lord's Supper or at the principal liturgical service celebrated by Christians who are separated from us.

(Directory, 56.)

10. Certain exceptions to the above regulations concerning the Liturgy of the Word at the Eucharist may be given by the local Ordinary due to considerations of deep or historic relations between the clergy involved, or when a visiting clergyman is of such prominence that there will be no confusion in the host congregation.

#### EASTERN ORTHODOX - CATHOLIC

11. The attitude of the Catholic Church to the Eastern Orthodox differs from that to the Protestants.

Between the Catholic Church and the Eastern Churches separated from us there is still a very close communion in matters of faith; moreover, through the celebration of the Eucharist of the Lord in each of these Churches, the Church of God is built up and grows in stature and although separated from us, yet these Churches possess true sacraments, above all--by apostolic succession--the priesthood and the Eucharist. (Directory, 40.)

12. Therefore, some sharing in liturgical worship, given suitable circumstances and the approval of church authority, is not merely possible but encouraged. (Directory, 39.)

#### Baptism

13. The Eastern Churches (Catholic and Orthodox) confer Baptism together with Confirmation. Both these sacraments are automatically recognized as valid when conferred by a priest of canonical Eastern Orthodox Church and they may not be repeated even conditionally.

14. At an Orthodox baptism a Catholic may act as godparent if invited to do so. At a Catholic baptism, one of the godparents may be an Orthodox provided that the other is a Catholic and there is security for the Catholic education of the child.

#### Penance

15. Those Orthodox who spontaneously desire to do so, may receive the Sacrament of Penance from a Catholic confessor if there are not sufficient confessors in their Church. In similar circumstances the Catholic Church raises no objection if a Catholic seeks the sacrament from an Orthodox priest.



## Eucharist

16. For the Orthodox, reception of Holy Communion in a particular Church signifies complete union with that community; on principle, they oppose intercommunion. If exceptions are made in special cases, Catholics have no difficulty giving Holy Communion to Orthodox who ask for it. A Catholic may attend Orthodox liturgical services for any good reason, such as public office or function, blood relationships, friendships, desire to be better informed, absence of a Catholic church, etc. (Directory, 44 and 50.) Such cases fulfill the Sunday obligation. Catholics in such cases should take part in all the common responses, hymns, and actions like the rest of the congregation. In cases of necessity or special circumstances (e.g. impossibility over a long period for one of the faithful to receive the sacraments in his own Church) the Catholic may receive Holy Communion observing the Orthodox discipline as much as he can (previous confession, Eucharistic fast, etc.).

## Marriage

17. A Catholic may be bridesmaid or best man at an Orthodox wedding; similarly an Orthodox may serve at a Catholic wedding, although the Orthodox usually do not allow this.

18. The Orthodox consider that only a marriage performed by an Orthodox priest is valid for an Orthodox. In this matter, dispensations are not granted. So that both parties may remain in good conscience, and to allow the marriage to take place before an Orthodox priest, the Catholic authorities regularly grant dispensations from Canonical form when dealing with Orthodox-Catholic marriages. (Cf. Guidelines on Mixed Marriages.) Without this dispensation, the marriage would be valid but illicit for the Catholic. The priest of the Catholic party should try to be present but will not be permitted any active participation except perhaps to give a blessing and a short exhortation.

## Sacrament of the Sick

19. Should an Orthodox for some valid reason request the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick from a Catholic priest, he may confer it; if possible he should consult the Orthodox authorities first.

20. In general, the Orthodox clergy do not allow their faithful to participate in any way in the sacraments of other Churches or allow members of other Churches to participate in the Orthodox sacraments.

## BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

### Introduction

21. Baptism is the sacramental bond of unity among all Christians. Baptism and Confirmation are rites of initiation which incorporate a person into the Church and into Trinitarian life. Hence, the manner of administering these sacraments is a matter of great importance to all Christians.

### Sponsor and Christian Witness at Baptism (Confirmation)

22. In view of the ecclesial and educational role of sponsors and godparents, only Catholics may be asked to act as sponsors at a Catholic Baptism and Confirmation. (Directory, 57.)

23. Because of ties of blood or friendship however, a Christian of another communion may take part with a Catholic sponsor or godparent as a "Christian Witness". (Rite of Initiation of Baptism for Children, 10, No. 3.) (Notation of "Christian Witness" should be entered into Baptismal Register.) A Catholic may act in the same role for a member of a Protestant Church.



## RECEPTION INTO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

24. Indiscriminate attempts to rebaptize or reconfirm infants or adults are both theologically erroneous and canonically forbidden. In order to avoid difficulties which arise when some Christians of other traditions, led by the grace of the Holy Spirit and by their consciences, seek full communion with the Catholic Church certain norms regarding Baptism should be followed. Those who have been validly baptized<sup>1</sup> are never to be rebaptized or baptized conditionally. It is fitting that those already baptized be received into full and visible communion with the Catholic Church by means of a designated ceremony. The texts to be used for the admission of baptized Christians into full communion with the Catholic Church are found in the appendix to the new Rite for the Christian Initiation of Adults.

25. The reception should be recorded in an official register and a cross-reference to the Baptismal register should also be made. In preparing a ceremony of reception the following items should be borne in mind:

- a. The ceremony should not resemble the first steps of Christian initiation.
- b. It should not include the absolution from excommunication or the petition to adjure heresy or schism, as formerly prescribed by Canon 2314.
- c. It should be a reception and welcome of the Christian into the local parish community, and thus into full communion with the Catholic Church.

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<sup>1</sup>In the case of the Anglicans, Episcopalians, and some Protestant communions (Lutheran, Presbyterian, Reformed, Methodist, United Methodist, Old Catholic, Polish National, United Church of Christ (Congregational), Evangelical and Reformed Church, and the Disciples of Christ), it is sufficient merely to establish the fact that Baptism was administered.

- d. Ideally, the ceremony should take place during the Sunday liturgy when the local community gathers to celebrate the Eucharist.

26. When there is a doubt concerning validity of Baptism in the case of Communions other than those already noted, it is never permissible to baptize conditionally unless there exists prudent doubt of the fact or the validity of the Baptism already administered. The following points should be noted with respect to the validity of Baptism:

- a. The minister's insufficient faith or defective theology never itself renders the Baptism invalid. (Directory, 13 and Response of the Holy Office, December 28, 1949.)
- b. Sufficient intention in the baptizing minister is to be presumed unless there is serious ground for doubting that he intended to do what Christians do.
- c. Baptism by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling, together with the Trinitarian formula, is of itself valid. Therefore, if the rituals or liturgical books or established customs of a church or community prescribe one of these ways of baptizing, doubt can arise only if the minister does not observe the regulations of his own community or church.

If doubt persists after serious investigation to determine whether the Baptism was properly administered, and if it is deemed necessary to baptize conditionally, the private form should be used. The priest should explain both the significance of conditional Baptism and the reasons underlying his decision.

27. When the person being received into the Church has not been confirmed, the priest who baptizes or receives the person into the



Church may also administer the Sacrament of Confirmation at that time. The presence or absence of formal sponsors or witnesses should be decided in individual cases according to circumstances.

## EUCCHARIST

### The Sacraments and Non-Catholics

28. Celebration of the sacraments is an action of the celebrating community, carried out within the community, signifying the oneness in faith, worship, and life of the community. Without identification with the celebrating community, participation in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, Penance and Anointing of Sick, is not only forbidden but seems inappropriate. Nevertheless, since the sacraments are both signs of unity and sources of grace, the Church, for adequate reasons, can and does allow separated Christians access to those sacraments. This may be permitted in danger of death or in urgent need (during persecutions, in prisons) if the separated brother has no access to a minister of his own Church, and spontaneously asks a Catholic priest for the sacraments. He must have faith in these sacraments in harmony with that of the Church and be rightly disposed. (Directory, 55.)

29. In light of the conditions set out in the Directory above and in the light of other directives (e.g. Instruction Concerning Cases When Other Christians May Be Admitted to Eucharist Communion in the Catholic Church) priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist may obtain permission to give communion to non-Catholic Christians, especially those in hospitals and retirement homes, who may have been ignored or abandoned by their own denominations.

## Pastoral Guidance

30. On occasions when many non-Catholics are attending a Roman Catholic Eucharist, the celebrant is urged to make it clear at Communion that this is the time when those Catholics who choose to participate in the Eucharist should come forward.

31. Should the occasion arise that a non-Catholic Christian is granted permission to receive Holy Communion, care should be taken by priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist that adequate explanation be given to the Catholic congregation to avoid possible confusion.

32. Permission must be requested in writing from the Ordinary for each admission of a non-Catholic to Holy Communion. Should a situation arise in which there is not time for written recourse to the Ordinary, the priest may proceed with the administration of the Sacrament in accordance with the traditionally accepted norms in cases of urgency. However, the case must be reported in writing immediately thereafter to the Ordinary.

## MARRIAGE

### Introduction

33. The term "mixed marriage" refers to any marriage between a Roman Catholic and one who is not a Roman Catholic. In all marriages, the primary concern of the Church is to uphold the strength and stability of the marital union and the family that flows from it. The perfect union of mind and full communion of life which constitutes the married state most readily occurs when both partners share the same faith. For this reason the Church greatly desires that Catholics marry Catholics and in general discourages mixed marriages.



(Statement on the Implementation of the Apostolic Letter on Mixed Marriages, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, p. 1.)

34. Recognizing, however, the overwhelming reality of mixed marriages in the United States, the full pastoral solicitude of the Church extends to couples preparing to enter, or having already entered, such marriages. It is the abiding responsibility of all, especially priests in a pastoral ministry to families, to provide special help and support for the couple in a mixed marriage. This support is based on the respect of the uniqueness of each couple's situation and the holiness of the state of marriage itself.

#### Preparatory Responsibilities

##### A. Pastoral Guidance.

35. In addition to conducting the customary marriage preparation programs, the priest has responsibilities in the case of a mixed marriage. He should especially see that each couple understands and accepts the Christian ends and essential properties of marriage. In marriages between Catholics and other baptized Christians he should stress the positive aspects of what they share together in the life of grace, in faith, hope and charity, along with other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit. Each party should continue to follow and practice his faith, to search out those things that lead to unity and religious harmony, and to avoid indifference toward religious commitment so that the distinctive values of one or both are not lost. The love, sharing and loyalty of such a marriage may reach out and have a healing effect that can cross the barriers of a divided Christianity and remind us of the mystery of Christ's abiding love for his Church, a love that continually seeks to reconcile. (Statement on the Implementation of the Apostolic Letter on Mixed Marriages, p. 10.)

36. In the interest of greater understanding and unity, the priest should advise both parties to learn more of their partner's

religious convictions and to share occasionally in their worship services. He should remind the couple that common prayer is essential to their spiritual harmony and that reading and study of the Bible is especially important. Provision should be made that couples in mixed marriages receive pastoral care not only in the preparation and celebration of their marriages, but also appropriate encouragement and support throughout their life together. Such programs should be prepared and supplied in cooperation with other clergymen whenever possible.

B. Dispensation from Mixed Religion and Disparity of Worship.

37. After the instruction, the Catholic will be asked to explicitly declare and reaffirm his continuous, active faith; to promise to respect the conscience of the other party in marriage and to promise to do everything possible to see that the children of the marriage be baptized and educated in the Catholic faith. The non-Catholic must be informed of the promises and responsibility of the Catholic although no formal statement is required of the non-Catholic. This is the point where the couple should seriously weigh the results of their differing religious convictions and the influence of those convictions on each other's new life. The couple's effort to understand their individual religious traditions and serious discussions of the differences that exist can lead to a greater honesty, charity and understanding of the basis of unity.

C. Dispensation from Canonical Form.

38. Where there are serious difficulties in observing the Catholic Canonical Form in a mixed marriage, the Ordinary of the Catholic party or of the place where the marriage is to occur may dispense the Catholic from the observance of the form for a just pastoral cause. A non-exhaustive list of typical reasons: to achieve family harmony or to avoid family alienation; to obtain parental agreement to the marriage; to recognize the significant claims of



relationship or friendship with a non-Catholic Minister. Such marriages should take place before the non-Catholic party's minister or rabbi, and in his church or synagogue.

39. A Catholic priest is encouraged to attend and participate in the marriage of a Catholic party if invited to do so when a dispensation from the canonical form has been granted with the following stipulations: a) he may not perform a combined inter-ritual service with the minister, or a separate liturgical service. b) he may, with the agreement of the other minister, recite appropriate prayers, give his personal congratulations and blessings to the married couple, but not the nuptial blessing, and c) if the marriage is celebrated during a Scripture service, which is not the principal Sunday Service, he may read passages from the Sacred Scripture and give a homily.

#### Rites for Mixed Marriages

40. The rite of the wedding should be the official rite of the Church in which the wedding is celebrated. It is not permitted to have two religious services separately, or one service which would celebrate two rituals jointly or successively.

41. With the agreement of the couple, the priests are encouraged to invite the minister of the non-Catholic party to participate in the Catholic service. The participating minister may give additional prayers, blessings, and words of greeting and exhortation. He may, if Mass is not celebrated, read a lesson and/or preach. He is also encouraged to wear his liturgical vestments.

42. Since Eucharistic sharing is not permitted by the general discipline of the Church, the couple should be advised of the possible difficulties in celebrating the marriage within the context of the Eucharistic celebration.

43. Two members of other traditions may be the principle witnesses at a Catholic marriage. Likewise Catholics may serve as witnesses at marriages which are properly celebrated in churches of other Communions. Priests are encouraged to attend such marriage ceremonies when invited to do so.

44. For special regulations concerning Eastern Orthodox Christians and those professing Judaism, please refer elsewhere in these guidelines.

## BURIAL

### Non-Catholic in Catholic Cemeteries

45. The Catholic cemeteries in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles are available for burial to those not of the Roman Catholic faith, such as close relatives or the non-Catholic partner in a mixed marriage. In such cases, clergymen of the other denominations may conduct graveside services.

### Catholics in Other Than Catholic Cemeteries

46. The most recent synodal decrees for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles direct that the bodies of the faithful must not be buried in secular cemeteries. Priests are allowed to perform graveside services in other than Catholic cemeteries only for compelling reasons and with specific permission of the Archbishop or his delegate. Exceptions are made for veterans wishing to be interred in a National Cemetery and for converts utilizing property acquired before the profession of the Catholic faith.



## Burial Services in Other Christian Traditions

47. When requested by the family, priests may officiate at the funeral services of other traditions in funeral homes and at the graveside. By the same token, if invited, they may participate in the funeral services conducted by the decedent's minister.

48. Priests may not officiate at church funerals of other communions, but when asked by the family and the resident pastor, they may be present in the sanctuary or chancel to offer prayers and expressions of sympathy.

## Cremation

49. The Church strongly recommends that the practice of burying human remains be continued in the traditional manner. Nonetheless, those Catholics wishing to have their bodies cremated are entitled to a Christian burial, unless it is certain that their choice of cremation was motivated by a denial of Christian dogmas, a sectarian spirit, or hatred of the Catholic Church. Remains must be interred in a Catholic cemetery.



## INTERRELIGIOUS GUIDELINES

### INTRODUCTION

1. The term "interreligious" specifically refers to our relationship as Christians with those who are not part of the Christian tradition. These relationships are developed theologically in Conciliar documents such as the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.

2. The motive and ultimate aim of interreligious dialogue is to foster a deeper understanding and respect for the richness and integrity of other traditions and faiths. Another hoped-for aim is increased awareness of the life principles which are the common heritage of each of the world's great religions. However, true interreligious dialogue repudiates homogenization which is the blending of diverse traditions into a uniform experience.

3. In the document cited above, the Fathers of the Council made a momentous declaration regarding Judaism and Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism: no longer is our attitude to be one of superior toleration; instead, we are urged to recognize these religions as positive forces with which the Church can and should enter into dialogue. Some of the reasons which underlay this change are enumerated in the second paragraph of the Declaration:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions. She looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though different in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of truth which enlightens all men.



Thus, the Church in dialogue is sensitive to the concrete forms in which man is seeking God. The quest for the Absolute and man's experience of the Absolute are manifold. Through our sensitivity to this diverse richness we can also come to appreciate the special relation of Judaism and Islam to Christianity and the History of Salvation, based on the uniqueness of God's self-revelation through the Law, the Prophets, and his Son.

4. For pastoral reasons, we shall now elaborate our relationships with these religions. Since much in those relationships rests on dialogue, it is well to remind ourselves that dialogue involves two parties. In any local dialogue, there are certain sensitivities which are priority concerns of each partner. Ignorance of these sensitivities, or lack of appreciation for them, can greatly inhibit true communication.

5. Some of the concerns we bring to interreligious dialogue are the issues centering on the respect for life, especially the abortion question; private education and schools; the needs of the Spanish-speaking and other minority groups in Los Angeles.

#### JEWISH-CATHOLIC DIALOGUE

6. Los Angeles has one of the major Jewish communities of the world in terms of size and influence. The Church of Los Angeles has enjoyed a long and deep sense of mutual respect with this community.

7. We acknowledge that the Jewish community has its own sensitivities and concerns. Catholics in dialogue with Jews should be mindful of the following sensitivities which seem to be growing concerns in many portions of the Jewish community:

- a. The Holocaust: The mass murder of 6 million Jews by the Nazis is a painful memory to many American Jews;

- b. The State of Israel: To American Jews, Israel is not "their country" but the Israelis are part of "their people";
- c. Anti-Semitism: Some view Jews as inferior or reprobate;
- d. Proselytizing: Efforts to convert Jews to Christianity; or views of Judaism as an "incomplete faith" are considered unacceptable;
- e. Interfaith Marriage: As a small minority, Jews are concerned with preserving a distinct living faith.

8. While these are not intended to be all-inclusive, they are agenda concerns we must sensitively consider. As Catholics we ought to be aware that these issues will influence all dialogue in which the Jewish community becomes involved.

#### Local Dialogues

9. Three distinct local dialogues are encouraged:

Priest-Rabbi Dialogue: In these dialogues priest and rabbis may gradually explore areas of mutual concern and sensitivity. With our scriptural heritage having such a mutuality, it is highly recommended that joint scripture exploration between scholars and clergy of both faiths be encouraged. The Council reminds us that "since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is great, this sacred Synod wished to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit above all of biblical and theological studies, and of brotherly dialogue". (Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, 4.) St. John's



Major Seminary and local rabbinic seminaries are ideal centers for student exploration of our heritage. In addition, homiletic and liturgical studies could counteract a sometimes anti-Semitic Gospel interpretation and do much to develop mutual richness in music, festival and symbol. Since marriage and family life are of extreme concern in both communities, joint study, understanding and action might well aid the struggle in which these institutions find themselves.

Education: Dialogue is a reality that looks both to the present and to the future for a measure of success. The well-developed parochial and secondary religious education systems of the Jewish and Catholic communities in Los Angeles offers a unique opportunity to continue the positive achievements of the Jewish-Catholic dialogue. By exposing students to the religions and by elaborating on the sources common to both, the success of today's dialogue may be assured for the future.

Parish and Synagogue Interaction: If the dialogue between Catholics and Jews is to be thorough and significant, it must also include a grassroots exchange between Catholic and Jewish congregations. Certainly the Easter-Passover liturgical convergence, while presenting some inherent difficulties, does offer an opportune time for interchange. Times such as Thanksgiving present another excellent opportunity for mutual sharing. However, as in any other dialogue, great care, patience and understanding are required. It is suggested that priests and rabbis participate in dialogues on their own level as preparation for a congregational dialogue.

10. In exploring such parish--synagogue interactions, priests and rabbis might find it beneficial to seek suggestions from the Interreligious Commission of the Archdiocese and the Committee on Interreligious Affairs of the Board of Rabbis. There are basic pastoral needs which need careful attention to properly implement the goals of these dialogues:



- a. Selectivity in Scripture texts: While the entire Hebrew Scripture or Old Testament is part of Catholic tradition, the New Testament is not part of the Jewish Testament. To avoid offense and mutual misunderstanding, texts for liturgical services or joint scripture study must be selected very carefully.
- b. Liturgical Interchange: Such an interchange could consist of attendance at a Catholic or Jewish worship service or a joint prayer service cooperatively and sensitively developed by both traditions.
- c. Trinitarian Formulas: While a prayer to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the One God of Creation and the Universe, is part of the Catholic experience, the Catholic formulas referring to the Trinity or Jesus as Lord are foreign to the Jewish expression.
- d. Correct use of the Seder Service: The Seder Service can be an enriching experience for the Catholic if it is conducted in accordance with authentic Jewish Tradition. We must avoid turning it into a bogus Last Supper meal.
- e. Correct Awareness of Holy Days: To insure a clear understanding of the meaning of Holy Days and Sacred Seasons in the context of the respective faiths. Hanukkah must be understood in the light of Jewish History: it is not a Jewish Christmas. Easter must be understood in the light of the Christian belief in the Resurrection: it is not a Christian Passover.
- f. Centrality of the Person of Christ: Because of the centrality of Christ in our faith Catholics may experience a sense of shock when exposed to Judaism,

in which Christ plays no role. Conversely, the centrality of Christ can be a shock to Jewish observers. Priests and rabbis should be aware of this possibility and should prepare their congregations for these differences.

- g. **Christian Call to Witness:** The obligation to witness our faith may be interpreted by non-Christians as an attempt to denigrate their religious beliefs. In our manifestations of witness, we must be particularly sensitive to avoid any semblance of proselytism. Jews are disturbed when members of so-called "Jesus Movements" (such as "Jews for Jesus") disturb their privacy in the name of Christianity. The Archdiocese is not connected with these movements and recognizes the animosity they may cause.

11. The religious experience connected with the pastoral sacraments and rites of Baptism, Marriage, Confirmation, Bar Mitzvah and Burial should be explored. The ability to express appropriate sentiments on these occasions is one of the basic signs of authentic understanding and respect. Because of its many ecumenical dimensions, we shall explore in detail the official Catholic and Jewish positions regarding marriage.

#### Catholic-Jewish Marriages

12. When a Catholic and a Jew decide to enter into marriage, the priest who is helping them prepare a marriage ceremony should be sensitive to the religious conviction and customs of both parties. Neither party to the marriage should be asked to violate the integrity of his or her faith.

13. Priests of the Archdiocese should be aware that the Jewish community is officially in opposition to mixed marriages; they are a prime area of concern and sensitivity within the Jewish community.

14. The official statement of the Board of Rabbis of Southern California, made in response to an inquiry from the Archdiocesan Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, highlights this concern:

Our Board of Rabbis has issued a statement, as of February 28, 1974, in which we called upon members to refrain from officiating at mixed marriages. This is in accordance with the decision and guidelines established by each of our three rabbinical associations and is in keeping with our on-going Jewish tradition.

Similarly, all of our rabbinical bodies have reaffirmed the historic view of Judaism that Rabbis should not participate with clergymen of other faiths in the performance of marriage ceremonies.

Hence Rabbis who do participate with ministers of other faiths in such ceremonies are violating Jewish doctrine and practice and are doing so without the sanction of tradition or the approval of their rabbinic bodies.

Our committee, of course, recognizes that the Catholic religious community establishes regulations for the guidance of its own constituency, but in the matter referred to us it also seems to touch upon concepts and rites treasured by the Jewish community. The official religious leadership of the Jewish faith would therefore welcome Catholic cooperation in helping to keep intact our accepted standards and views concerning rabbinical participation in Jewish-Catholic marriages.



These regulations should be shared with a Jewish-Catholic couple seeking pastoral advice concerning marriage. The priest should also advise the couple that the Catholic Church does not encourage such marriages; indeed, the Church greatly desires that Catholics marry Catholics. This position stems from a concern for the marital union and the good of the family.

15. If the priest is still asked to assist after sharing this with the Catholic-Jewish couple, the following avenues may be pursued:

- a. A priest may officiate at the wedding of a Jew and Catholic, with a dispensation from the impediment of disparity of worship, in the sanctuary or other part of the Catholic Church, or in any suitable building on the parish grounds.
- b. A dispensation from the Catholic form of marriage may be sought so that the Catholic party may marry in a religious ceremony before a rabbi in a temple, or other sacred or private place.
- c. If neither of these options is possible, then the Ordinary is prepared to dispense the Catholic party from the Catholic form of marriage so that a public ceremony that is civilly valid will be accepted by the Catholic Church as both licit and valid.

16. Jews may be admitted as witnesses and attendants at a marriage ceremony in a Catholic church. Catholics may act as witnesses and attendants at the wedding of friends who are Jews.

17. When a priest or deacon is invited to participate in the marriage ceremony of two Jews conducted by a Rabbi, he may offer prayers for the couple and invoke God's blessing on them.

18. When a Rabbi is invited to participate in the marriage ceremony of two Catholics conducted by a priest, the Rabbi should be offered a place of honor in the sanctuary and may offer prayers for the couple and invoke God's blessing on them.

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19. All mixed marriages between Catholics and those who are not Jews and who are not baptized, fall under the general provisions of existing Church law.

#### THE CATHOLIC-ISLAMIC DIALOGUE

20. Islam enjoys a place of esteem in Catholic dialogue. In the past, we have too often viewed the differences between us and neglected to reflect on our common patrimony--belief in a monotheistic God, identification with the prophet Abraham, and reverence for Christ and Mary.

21. In certain instances the faith of Islam has been the victim of over-simplification and even inaccurate caricature. Indeed our location as the center of the film industry encourages us to acknowledge this since films have been a major factor in developing an erroneous sense of Islam. Brutality, ignorance, the fostering of "Holy War" and a lack of cleanliness are among the more obvious false universal accusations attributed to Islam. Dialogue might well begin with a self examination to determine if we have, perhaps unconsciously, subscribed to the many prevalent misconceptions about Islam.

22. Today an Arab renaissance is taking place. With a substantial part of the Arab world Islamic by belief, our educational efforts should develop a comprehensive presentation of the tenets of Islam.



23. A professional clergy is not a part of Islam. Friday is the principal day of worship, with public prayer a requisite for a true believer. We should be aware that, as in the Jewish dialogue, the Trinitarian formulas may cause a certain amount of uneasiness. Because of materialistic influences and diminishing ethnic influence, the Islamic community in Los Angeles faces challenges to marriage and family, as well as to religious practice by the younger generation. These along with the authentic teachings and practices of Islam, present excellent areas for dialogue.

#### CATHOLIC-BUDDHIST DIALOGUE

24. Chinese and Japanese communities have been established in Los Angeles for many years; in the last ten years, the general Asian population in our area has increased dramatically. This fact, coupled with recent interreligious developments, indicates a growing interest for Catholic-Buddhist dialogue.

25. The Catholic-Buddhist dialogue is still in its infancy: much greater dialogue on an international level will be necessary before significant local dialogues will be practical. However, some general concepts may assist to establish a framework for discussion.

26. An understanding of theological terminology is extremely difficult, even for basic concepts such as God, religion, and prayer. There are a multitude of sects and schools within the general framework of Buddhism, and these tend to be different from each other in doctrine and practice. The Buddhist clergy are generally non-English speaking, especially in the Japanese community.

27. At least for the present time, it seems that the Catholic-Buddhist dialogue will be almost entirely educational. Everyone engaged in this dialogue ought to be aware of the theological differences which separate us still more.



28. Care should be taken in exploring the more youth oriented forms of Buddhism which have attracted a sizeable following. These sects sometimes represent an attempt at blending many divergent elements and often do not accurately reflect actual Buddhist belief. The Commission has a resource person available for guidance in this area.

#### CATHOLIC-HINDU DIALOGUE

29. Although the Hindu population within the Los Angeles area is somewhat limited, we do have a living faith community of the Hindu Tradition. This tradition presents many obstacles to any type of consensus dialogue. However, prayer, spiritual life and moral values are particularly positive areas for dialogue.

30. Schools or systems of belief and practice are many and varied. Terminology is also an area of extreme divergence. Certain schools are particularly attractive to younger persons within our community. The Commission will be happy to make a resource person available for particular questions.

#### ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

31. We suggest that anyone interested in the less familiar world religions contact the Interreligious Council of Southern California through the Archdiocesan Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. Council meetings are held quarterly at one of the non-Jewish-Christian faith communities; a religious presentation by one of the member religions is a part of the program.

32. We attempt no examination of the varied cults, sects or movements present in the Los Angeles area. It is the practice of the Commission to consult with recognized scholars in religious studies at one of our major universities when we need detailed information in these areas.



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WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

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Buddhist Federation of Southern California  
Council of Churches of Southern California  
Greek Orthodox Church of Los Angeles  
Islamic Foundation of Southern California  
Los Angeles Council of Churches  
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Orthodox Churches

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## APPENDIX

### SERVICE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

#### PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP AND INVOCATION: Pastor, St. John's Church

Lord, you have gathered together various peoples in the confession of your name: Grant us to want what you command, and the power to carry it out, so that among your people who have been called to eternal life, there may be communion of mind in one faith and unity of action in serving you and your world. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

HYMN: e.g. "The Church's One Foundation" or "Faith of our Fathers"

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING: Pastor, Tabernacle Baptist  
e.g. Jn. 3: 1-5 or Jn. 13: 31-38

MEDITATION PSALM: Recited by all  
e.g. Psalm 103

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING Sister Helen Smith  
e.g. Mt. 5: 1-16 or Jn. 17: 20-26

SERMON Pastor, Blessed Sacrament

#### PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL:

My Brothers and Sisters, let us ardently pray for God's mercy. As he sent his Son into the world to bring the Good News to the poor and to heal those who are contrite of heart, may he bring salvation today to all who are in need.

For God's holy Church, that she may be preserved from every evil and be made perfect in his love, let us pray to the Lord.

Resp: Lord, hear our prayer.

For the shepherd and leaders of all the Christian communions, that they may be faithful servants of the gospel of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

Resp: Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who hear the name of Christ, that the word of the Lord be accomplished on them, and their unity be made perfect, let us pray to the Lord.

Resp: Lord...

For all of us gathered here, for those throughout the world who pray with us, that by devoting ourselves to the works of peace, of love and justice, we may work for true unity among all men, let us pray to the Lord.

Resp: Lord...

For all in public authority, that they may be blessed and enlightened in their work for true peace and harmony among men and nations, let us pray to the Lord.

Resp: Lord...

For those who are suffering trials and afflictions, for those in need of God's mercy and the assistance of their brothers, for all who are seeking the light of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

Resp: Lord...



LEADER: O God, you have determined that the fullness of the commandments lies in love of You and of our neighbor. Accept the prayers which, out of love for your name we confidently offer for our needs and those of the world. Through Christ our Lord.

#### RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES:

Leader: We were buried with Christ in baptism, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might walk in newness of life. You are God's people, so that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into this marvelous light.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all.

Therefore, will you again renew the promises made in your baptism?

Will you accept again the new life which God gives in Christ and will you continue to serve God faithfully in his holy Church?

All: We accept anew Christ Jesus as our Savior and Lord; we acknowledge and affirm the faith by which the Church lives; We celebrate our unity with all who share in the one baptism;  
We love and trust God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father;  
By his grace we are made his people;  
To him be glory forever. Amen.

PRAYER AND BENEDICTION:

Pastor, Calvary Methodist

POSTLUDE

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(Taken in part from the 1976 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity leaflet and the Ecumenical Worship Services held in Utica, N.Y. in 1973.)

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