

What is the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue?

*In 1964 Pope Paul VI established a special office for relations with followers of other religions. This innovative move took place a year before the groundbreaking document of the Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate*, which set the Catholic Church on a new trajectory of dialogue with others.*

The Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue “works to ensure that dialogue with the followers of other religions takes place with an attitude of listening, esteem and respect. It fosters various kinds of interactions so that peace, freedom, social justice, the protection and safeguarding of creation, and spiritual and moral values may be promoted” (Predicate Evangelium 148).



Pope Francis is honored by a Hindu monk during his visit to Sri Lanka.

“Peace requires the gentle power of dialogue.”

Pope Francis, General Audience,
9 November 2022

Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue

Dialoguing with followers of other religions with an attitude of listening and esteem



Followers of God, Dolores Puthod, 1978

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Goals and Activities

The goal of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue (DID) is to promote respect, mutual understanding, and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of others religious traditions.

Relations with the Jews is an area cared for by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity.

The Dicastery accomplishes its goal by:

- ◇ supporting dialogue among Christians concerning relations with followers of other religions;
- ◇ providing resources and guidance for the work of dialogue in local Catholic Churches;
- ◇ sustaining relationships and sponsoring events that foster a spirit of dialogue and fraternity with various groups;
- ◇ encouraging the study of religions among Christians and inviting followers of other religions to study Christianity more deeply;
- ◇ promoting the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue.

The Dicastery's Structure

Given the universal nature of the Catholic Church, the Dicastery has collaborators living on every continent. The office in Rome, in a spirit of service, animates the Church to carry out her mission of interreligious dialogue.

The Dicastery is under the leadership of a Prefect, currently Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, MCCJ, assisted by a Secretary and an Undersecretary, all appointed by the Holy Father. Officials and other personnel have expertise in various religions.

Members of the Dicastery, bishops throughout the world, assist in concretizing the Dicastery's efforts, while consultors, both clergy and lay, give valuable input.

Related Entities

The Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims has taken on in particular way the dialogue with Islam.

The Nostra Aetate Foundation provides scholarships for students of other religions to study Christianity and interreligious dialogue in Rome.



Cardinal Ayuso Guixot with the Grand Imam Al-Tayyeb.



Members of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue participated in the First Buddhist-Christian Dialogue for Nuns.

“The dialogue that we need cannot but be open and respectful, and thus prove fruitful. Mutual respect is the condition and, at the same time, the aim of interreligious dialogue: respecting others' right to life, to physical integrity, to fundamental freedoms, namely freedom of conscience, of thought, of expression and of religions.”

Pope Francis, Interreligious Audience for the 50th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, 28 October 2015