
The Importance of Interfaith Dialogue

Interfaith dialogue defined as (from the 'What is Interfaith Dialogue?...' video) "refers to cooperative, constructive and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions". Interfaith dialogue is very important as it helps religions grow and mature through time and create a firm relationship between them that society as a bond between them. Peace. "Many think differently, feel differently, seeking God or meeting God in different ways. In this crowd, in this range of religions, there is only one certainty that we have for all: we are all children of God." Pope Francis, Feast of the Epiphany, 6 January 2016. This quote explains why interfaith dialogue is important especially for the two Abrahamic faiths this exposition is going to focus on; Catholicism and Judaism. Catholicism and Judaism together share a similar thought on core a belief which is God. God throughout Judaism is referred to differently. In the Bible, Judaism's God according to my Jewish Learning the proper name is Yahweh but is also referred to as Tetragrammaton which is the equivalent of Hebrew YHVH yet in the Torah the word God is translated into the word Adonai from the word Adon or Lord. El or Elohim is also a common name for God. Another point is that Judaism is a monotheistic faith which is a belief that only one god exists, which is portrayed through the teaching of Torah but what is different about Catholicism is that Catholics believes in the Holy Trinity. God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. God just existed in the universe before the light came to be, Jesus came from the essence of God and the Holy Spirit was present before life ever existed. "...Nevertheless, these three persons are not to be considered separable, since we believe that no one of them existed or at any time effected anything before the other, after the other, or without the other." This quote was said during the Eleventh Synod of Toledo in Spain (675 AD) meaning Catholicism is a Trinitarian belief "which is relating religion to believe in the doctrine of the Trinity" and throughout the Catholic faith, God is either referred to Lord/Lord Almighty or God.

One of Judaism's traditional practice for a baby boy's initiation into their religion is called Circumcision but in Catholicism one of their 7 sacraments is Baptism which is also the initiation into the catholic church but it is for any age. Circumcision is religious practice done eight days before a boys birth. It is a way of showing the boy is entering the Jewish community. It means that now the promises and faithfulness of God are now bestowed upon him. According to My Jewish Learning when the ceremony of 'Milah' occured Elijah usually had seat set aside for him as he was the prophet of honor but according to legend 'Milah' wasn't recognized in the Northern kingdom of Israel, God said to Elijah that the ceremony of 'Milah' will take place without Elijah. Boys usually get their Hebrew names during this ceremony and girls usually get named after their dead ancestors but in the Catholic Church at any age the first step to being fully initiated into the Catholic Church is Baptism. Unlike Judaism the processes is the same for male and females. The baby's priest will do the sign of the cross on the baby's forehead and will get the Godparents to do the same. Doing the sign of the cross is an invisible sign that says 'you belong to christ'. Everyone will gather around the baptismal font(a large bowl made out of marble or glass) which holds the waters of baptism. The mother holds the child and priest or deacon then ask the parents what are their plans for the child and they reply "baptism" which you then answer the baptismal promises for your baby which are based on the Apostles creed.

The celebrant then starts to anoint you baby with the oil of baptism(Olive oil) which symbolises "strengthening from the struggles of life" says Catholic Australia cause back in the old days

athletes used to put oil on their bodies to strengthen them for more softer skin and Chrism oil(a combination of olive oil and balsam) which “The sealing with the gifts of the Holy Spirit” also says Catholic Australia. The celebrant then pour the water(which represents cleansing and life) on the baby or adult forehead and says "I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The Father or the godparents for the child a given a candle(which is a sign of new life) and will stand by the child, the baby is given a white garment representing being clothed by Christ and at the end of the Baptism it will be register into that church's' system and you will be given a birth certificate. Catholicism has a Bible(from the Greek word 'books') which contains 73 books divided into two parts the Old Testament(before christ) and the New Testament (looking at the life of christ)and Judaism has the Hebrew Bible which were organized into three part; the Torah(Five Books of Moses),the Nevi'im(Prophets) and the Ketuvim(Writings). In Judaism the Torah is full of the stories of moses and how he lead the israelites to freedom it also contains when he stopped at Mount Sai to reveles the ten commandments. The prophets with book is divided into two parts, the first part is the books of former prophets Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings which are the book that explain which reveals the point of view of Israel joining God's Covenant and the second part hold the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, along with 12 minor prophets talking about the return to God and the Torah and the final book in the prophets is the Writings which includes The Psalms, Lamentations, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Esther and Ezra-Nehemiah and 1-2 Chronicles But with Catholicism there are only two different parts the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament holds around about 46 books which contain according to about catholics “history, poetry and prophecy which hold the wisdom and knowledge of God and about ourselves” and though it was written before the time of Christ Catholics still find it important. The New Testament contains The Gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; John being particularly written differently from the others. The remaining part of the mostly epistles (letters) written by paul and the other apostles and according about catholic they New Testament and Old testament “are vitally important evidence of God's loving care for humanity throughout history”. Catholic Earthcare Australia associated with the faith of catholicism is “ecological agency of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference” says Catholic Earthcare Australia their vision is which is quoted from the official “is for an ecologically sustainable and resilient Australia, where Catholic communities play an active part in the holistic care of social, human and environmental ecology” meaning they want to do everything they can look after australia's ecological health . Catholic Earthcare is the advisory of the BCJED (Bishops' Commission for Justice, Ecology and Development) who look after matters of “safeguarding of the integrity of Creation, environmental justice and ecological sustainability” says their website. This organisation does research through the lense of catholic scriptures and church 's environmental teachings, it supports ecological endeavours with the church, their website says “... provides voice for the victims of pollution, environmental degradation and injustice” plus they provide educational material to catholic schools but they do a whole lot more for the Australian community like being advocate against about climate change and helping the Great Barrier Reef.

Jewish Care is an organisation associated with the faith Judaism. It has domestic violence programs, it deal with mental health, it has Disability Services and contribute to the elderly with the australian community with community aged services. Their official website states that they have “...over 25 programs which help 4,000 people each year.”. They support those people “Giving information, advice and referrals based on assessment and planning, providing practical support and assistance, helping people acquire skills to deal with the challenges they face, developing and building social connections and enhancing community awareness and

education” says their official website. Overall they have about 278 staff members. Interfaith dialogue important as some of the general knowledge on different faiths can be collected from websites or books but talking to people who contribute their daily lives to a specific faith everyday gives a real insight into that faith which develops and transforms the general understanding of that faith which benefits each religion that contributes to the interfaith dialogue. It is important to keep up these conversions with the neighbouring religions as it allows a foundation of trust and comprehension between the because without this crucial dialogue religions would be at war about misinterpretations or false information spreading throughout the church communities about their own faith. In Conclusion, Interfaith dialogue is a very important concept practice performed by the religions of the world like Catholicism and Judaism. Without this much needed dialogue we would be able to discuss our faiths as easily and as openly as we would wish to with other and explain the crises that circle our beliefs. As Pope Francis once said “Many think differently, feel differently, seeking God or meeting God in different ways. In this crowd, in this range of religions, there is only one certainty that we have for all: we are all children of God.”

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