



“On the Path toward Christian Unity” Ecumenical Video Series

*United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs*

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The Importance of Friendship – Bishop Denis Madden

Are you friends with lots of different kinds of people: from different backgrounds, beliefs, or states in life? Can you see the world as others see it? In what ways does our Church or community foster and build friendship, both within and outside of our community? How did Christ befriend people? How is friendship indispensable to ecumenism? How are they related to one another?

2. Why Be Ecumenical at All? Part 1 - Rev. Dr. John Crossin, OSFS

Are we currently doing anything within our community to work for Christian unity? How do you view Christians of a different denomination? Do you see them as a threat, in error, as strangers or as an unknown entity? Or do you see them as brothers and sisters in the faith in Jesus Christ, sharing a common baptism?

3. Why Be Ecumenical at All? Part 2 - Rev. Dr. John Crossin, OSFS

Why is it good to be ecumenical and how does ecumenism serve the common good of our communities? Do you feel a sense of urgency for Christian unity? What could you do right now,

in your current life situation or within your community, to promote unity among Christians? Are there ecumenical programs already running in my area?

4. Ecumenical/Interreligious - Two Dialogues with Different Goals- Dr. Anthony Cirelli

What is the difference between ecumenical and interreligious dialogue? Why does the Catholic Church engage in interreligious dialogue and what is its goal? What is the name of the Second Vatican Council's document on Relations with Non-Christian Religions? What are the four types of interreligious dialogue? Have you experienced any, some or all of these types of dialogue with people of other religions in your own life? Explain or share your experience. What value would interreligious dialogue have within our own communities and how can it be fostered?

5. The Impact of Culture on Ecumenical Dialogue- Rev. Dr. Ron Roberson, CSP

What are some examples of cultural factors that can influence dialogue among different people? Have you had the experience of meeting people from a culture different than your own and realizing that you had different ways of seeing the world or ways of expressing yourselves? What are some ways in which cultural differences influenced the development and history of Christianity throughout the centuries? Can you recognize cultural differences that exist within the Church today? How might cultural differences continue to present challenges to the work of ecumenism? Can you think of ways in which cultural differences either within the Church or among Christian communities can be understood as an asset rather than an obstacle? Why is it important to recognize and understand cultural differences as we engage in the work of ecumenism?

6. Listening in Ecumenical Dialogue – Rev. Dr. John Crossin, OSFS

What qualities are needed for good listening? What does it mean to listen well? What are some obstacles to listening? Can you think of times when you were not able to listen because of a prejudice? Do you have any examples of times when you listened well? Can you think of any common prejudices that you think might be obstacles in the work toward Christian unity? How do we listen as a Church community can how can we improve?

7. Praying Together Ecumenically- Dr. Mitzi Budde

What are some occasions on which Christians from different communities might come together to pray? What are some prayers you might think are universally shared by all Christians? Does my parish conduct a prayer service for the week of Christian unity? What might the planning of such an event look like? Have you ever attended a prayer service with other Christians? What might we learn about one another when we come together to pray and how does prayer strengthen the bonds between us?

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8. Grassroots Ecumenism- Fr. Don Rooney

What is the relationship between churches collaborating together in works of charity and ecumenism? Why is it important for Christians to serve others together? Do you participate in charitable works within your community, and if so, does it bring you into contact with other faith communities?

9. Understanding the Church- Msgr. Paul McPartlan

How is the gathering of Christians a sign of something to come? What are the different levels of communion within the Church? How is the Eucharist the centerpiece of the Church's communion? What role does the pope have in the Catholic Church and how is he or can he be a protagonist of ecumenism?

10. The Alphabet Soup of Ecumenical Organizations- Ms. Kirsten Evans

What are some of the most important ecumenical organizations within and outside of the Catholic Church? Do you know who the ecumenical officer of your diocese is? Have you ever been personally involved in any of these or any other ecumenical organization? What is the role of these organizations in the life of the Church?

11. Ecumenical Couples- Mrs. Sheila Garcia

What is an ecumenical marriage? Should ecumenical marriages be viewed as a problem or an opportunity? How can an ecumenical marriage reflect on a micro-level the work of the ecumenical movement on the macro-level? Does the Catholic Church recognize marriage between two baptized Christians as a sacrament? What might some of the concerns be when going into an ecumenical marriage? Can inter-church marriages succeed?

12. Ecumenism and the Family- Mrs. Anastasia Wooden

How do you share your faith with your children? Do you think it is important to teach children about faiths and people of faith different from their own? How do you teach your children about other faiths and what attitudes do you convey? In what way can it be said that family life is both a school of faith and a school of ecumenism?

13. Spiritual Growth at the Heart of Ecumenism - Rev. Thomas A. Prinz

What is the difference between propositional unity and spiritual unity? How do they relate to one another? How can differences be both a source of enrichment and a source of division? What spiritual practices do you cultivate in your life and in your Church? How might these

impact ecumenism? Some spiritual masters of the Catholic tradition include St. Augustine, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis de Sales, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Theresa of Avila, Mother Theresa, Thomas Merton, and Padre Pio? Have there been any spiritual masters who have influenced your life?

14. Personal Prayer and the Mystery of God - Rev. Dr. John Crossin, OSFS

Have you ever been to prayer service of a tradition different than your own and experienced God and been spiritually enriched? How do we cultivate spiritual practices in daily life? Have you ever felt God present while in the presence of other Christians or people of another religion?