

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA



Ecumenical & Interfaith Dialogue

AoA Diaconate Formation Program
Deacon Bob Hauert, Facilitator Emeritus

Why is it Important for our Deacons?

- Society is becoming more diverse and more divided
- Interfaith marriage no longer the exception
- Couples where only one is practicing their faith
- Religious diversity in Catholic Schools - non-Catholic families, students, faculty, staff
- Greater diversity in our community – demographic and religious changes over last 40 years
- Ever-growing secularization of society – needs for all people of faith to unite to show the value of belief in God
- “Nones” and “Dones”

Ecumenism

Promotion of cooperation and unity among Christians.

Jesus Christ founded one Church
and,

in the midst of his Passion, prayed,
“That they may all be one.” (John 17:21)



Interfaith (Interreligious) Dialogue



Promotion of cooperation among non-Christians

As Pope Francis said, *“It is neither a culture of confrontation nor a culture of conflict which builds harmony within and between peoples, but rather a culture of encounter and a culture of dialogue; this is the only way to peace”*

What the Church Says about this...

Lumen Gentium 15 - “In all of Christ’s disciples the Spirit arouses the desire to be **peacefully united**, in the manner determined by Christ, as **one flock under one shepherd**.”

Decree on Ecumenism 4 - “Today, in many parts of the world, under the inspiring grace of the Holy Spirit, many efforts are being made in prayer, word and action to attain that fullness of unity which Jesus Christ desires. The **Sacred Council exhorts all the Catholic faithful** to recognize the signs of the times and to **take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism**.

But their **primary duty** is to make a careful and honest appraisal of **whatever needs to be done or renewed** in the **Catholic household itself**, in order that its life may **bear witness** more clearly and faithfully to the **teachings and institutions** which have come to it from Christ through the Apostles.

Whatever is truly Christian is never contrary to what genuinely belongs to the faith; indeed, it can always bring a deeper realization of the mystery of Christ and the Church.

What the Church Says in the Catechism

820 - Christ always gives his Church the **gift of unity**, but the **Church must** always **pray and work to maintain, reinforce, and perfect** the unity that Christ wills for her.

821 - Certain things are **required** in order to **respond adequately** to this call:

1. - a **permanent *renewal* of the Church** in greater fidelity to her vocation; such renewal is the driving-force of the movement toward unity;²⁸⁰
2. - ***conversion of heart as the faithful*** "try to live holier lives according to the Gospel";²⁸¹ for it is the unfaithfulness of the members to Christ's gift which causes divisions;
3. - ***prayer in common***, because "change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer **for the unity of Christians**, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name 'spiritual ecumenism;'"
4. - ***fraternal knowledge* of each other**,
5. - ***ecumenical formation*** of the faithful and especially of priests; (*and deacons*)
6. - ***dialogue*** among theologians and **meetings among Christians** of the different churches and communities;²⁸⁵
7. - ***collaboration*** among Christians in various areas of **service to mankind**

What did St John Paul II say...

Ut Unum Sint – St John Paul II

*“This unity, which the Lord has bestowed on his Church and in which he wishes to embrace all people, is **not something added on**, but stands as the **very heart of Christ’s mission**. Nor is it some secondary attribute of the community of his disciples. Rather, it **belongs to the very essence of this community.**”*



What the Church says about Interfaith Dialogue ...

Nostra Aetate - In Our Time

2. **The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions.** She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though **differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth** which enlightens all men.

The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through **dialogue and collaboration** with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they **recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men.**

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the **death of Christ;**(13) still, **what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews,** without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the **Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God,** as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures.

USCCB - Video

[USCCB On the Path Toward Christian Unity](#)



Course Outline

This class is about how you **“DO” ecumenism and interfaith dialogue** in your parish as a deacon.

No text book.

Reflections and discussion

Assumption that you have previously studied the relevant documents of Vatican II

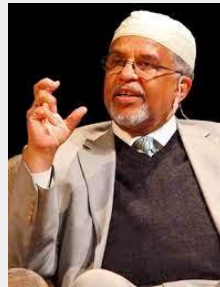
Format – Interviews with clergy/leaders of other traditions with Q&A

Discussion of the interview during the following class.

Assignment – reflection on what you heard in the interview and its application to your ministry.

Course Outline (continued)

Class Project – In addition to the reflections after each of the interviews, class members are required to engage a minimum of three different faith traditions with at least one being a non-Christian congregation. Engagement might include but is not limited to, attendance at a worship service, conversation with the clergy or director of the congregation, or attendance at an Ecumenical or Interfaith event. The instructor will provide guidelines for the engagements. Students submit a minimum of a 3-page summary of the visits.



Learning Outcomes

- Through interviews of clergy/leaders from Christian and non-Christian traditions and subsequent reflection and discussion, to come to a greater appreciation of the “Other”.
- Understand some of the basic tenets of other Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Eastern traditions.
- Understand and be comfortable with approaching and dialoguing with clergy and laypersons of other traditions.
- Be able to apply what is learned to pastoral opportunities to be faced as a part of an active diaconate in your parish.

Guest Speaker Interview Questions

Ecumenism & Interfaith Dialogue

- 1) Can you please share with us the story of your journey into ministry?
- 2) Please tell us about your congregation and how you worship.
 - a. Would it be possible for me to attend a service?
 - b. Have you ever attended a service in a Catholic Church? What were your impressions?
- 3) Can you explain to us the different branches of your tradition? (Southern Baptist, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship; Orthodox, Reform, Conservative Jews; Shia, Sunni Muslims; Hindus, Vaidantists, Buddhist).
 - a. What should we as Catholic Clergy know about your tradition prior to approaching another minister in your tradition to discuss Ecumenical or Interfaith Dialogue?
 - b. How should we address clergy in your faith?
 - c. What subjects would be off-limits?

Guest Speaker Interview Questions Ecumenism & Interfaith Dialogue

4) What are the core beliefs (Pillars) of your faith?

5) What has been your exposure to Catholics, with the Church as an Institution and with Catholic Individuals?

a. Can you please describe a pastoral situation, like a conversion, wedding, baptism, that involved a member of your congregation and a Catholic?

b. What are the practical implications of marriages/relationships between members of your tradition and Catholics?

c. Is preparation of couples for marriage a part of your ministry? What is involved? Would you except preparation done at a Catholic Church for a wedding in your church?

d. What are your thoughts on interfaith marriages?

Guest Speaker Interview Questions Ecumenism & Interfaith Dialogue

6) Why is Ecumenism and Interfaith dialogue important?

- a. What are the key elements of effect dialogue?
- b. What are the obstacles to meaningful dialogue?
- c. How do you see dialogue progressing over the next few years?

7) Can you suggest any books, readings or websites that will help us to better understand your tradition?

8) Questions from the Deacon Candidates

Reflection Questions – Ecumenical and Interfaith Dialogue

After each of our speakers, please submit your reflection using the questions below as a guide. Respond via email to bhauert@ihmatlanta.org. Please provide at least one paragraph for each of the questions (more if needed). Reflections to be submitted within seven (7) days of the interview.

- 1) What did you learn from our guest about his/her tradition that surprised and/or resonated with you? Why?***

- 2) What areas of commonality with Catholicism and this this tradition did you notice? Elaborate.***

- 3) What did you hear that you found yourself resisting, uncomfortable or pushing back? Why?***

- 4) How can you take what you heard and use it in your ministry? Elaborate.***

Follow-up Class after each Interview

Track the response submitted by each man.

Require thoughtful, complete responses. No single sentence response

Note common questions/responses to each reflection question as subject to be discussed in Review Class.

Note those things that surprised or resonated with student and ask him to explain further.

Note those things that made individual uncomfortable and discuss why? Solicit reactions from other men (and wives if in attendance).

Note how what was learned can assist in the future. Share with class.

Getting Started

Finding a Facilitator (Teacher)

- Identify a Deacon (preferably) who has some experience with Ecumenical and/or Interfaith dialogue.
- Review the Course Learning Objectives and Syllabus

Once selected, have the Facilitator arrange for guest speakers.

- If classes are held on Saturday, may be difficult to get an active Rabbi. May need to look at Rabbi Emeritus (retired)
- Friday may be difficult for Iman
- Facilitator to review Church Documents related to Ecumenism and Interfaith Dialogue.

At the **first class**, ask the Deacon Wannabees to tell their story

- Name, Spouse name, Parish, level of past involvement in Ecumenical and/or Interfaith work

Prepare Spreadsheet with Contact Information

Name	Parish	Cell Phone	email	Spouse	Cell	email
James Windon	St Philip Benizi	770-900-4680	slimjimw2@yahoo.com	Beth Windon	770-900-4679	bwindon5@gmail.com
Bill Kester	OLA	678-429-1500	kester4939@gmail.com			
Jim Grebe	Holy Family	972-261-4377	jgrebe@cioblueprint.com			
David Hernandez	Holy Cross	678-409-1974	davidhtotal04@hotmail.com	Concepcion		
Bruce Goodwin	Cathedral of Christ the King	404-275-0578	bagoodwin92@hotmail.com	Jean		
Joe Odom	St John Neumann	404-281-5941	joeodomcpa@gmail.com			
Dev Lobo	Transfiguration	770-828-6935	dev.lobo@comcast.net	Daphne		
Igor Ponce	St Claire of Assisi	404-791-5118	igor.ponce@comcast.net	Renee'		

Obtain pictures of each guy



Pedro Arenas



Vita Cama



Tad George



Ronald Hein



Alexis Hounlede



Chris Johnson



Javier Oliver



Carlos Vizcaino

Questions ?

Contact Information

Deacon Bob Hauert

bob.hauert@gmail.com

678-520-7111

The End

