

NATURE AND GOALS OF THE COUNCIL

- 1) to promote respect, mutual understanding, and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of others religious traditions;
- 2) to encourage the study of religions;
- 3) to promote the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue.



Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue



Assisi 1986 - World Day of Prayer for Peace



METHODOLOGY OF THE COUNCIL

1. Dialogue is a two-way communication. It implies speaking and listening, giving and receiving, mutual growth and enrichment. It is based on witness to one's faith as well as openness to the religion of another. It is not a betrayal of the mission of the Church, nor is it a new method of conversion to Christianity.

This view of interreligious dialogue is clearly affirmed in Blessed Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, as well as the two documents published by the PCID: *Reflections on Dialogue and Mission* (1984), and *Dialogue and Proclamation* (1991).

2. The PCID operates in close collaboration with special Commissions of the local Churches which have the principal responsibility of promoting interreligious dialogue.

3. The ecumenical dimension of interreligious dialogue is particularly taken into consideration. The PCID has an ongoing relationship with the World Council of Churches and it collaborates with the latter in initiatives of study and promotion of interreligious dialogue.

4. The PCID restricts itself to religious questions. Its competence does not, therefore, extend to political issues.

In 1964 Pope Paul VI instituted a special department of the Roman Curia for relations with followers of other religions, now known as the **Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID)**.

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Structure of the Council

1. The *decision-making body* consists of Members of the Council, approximately 35 Cardinals and Bishops from different parts of the world. Every two or three years a Plenary Assembly is convoked to discuss current issues and to set guidelines for the work of the Council.
2. The *advisory body* is made up of about 30 Consultors who, residing in different continents, are specialists in the study of religions and interreligious dialogue. They assist the Dicastery through their research and reflection. There are periodic meetings of consultors at a continental level.
3. The *executive body* is the permanent staff engaged in the work of the Dicastery and is made up of President, Secretary, Under-Secretary and different Officials for Islam, Traditional Religions, Asian Religions, New Religious Movements, and other administrative assistants and support staff.
4. The *Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims* was instituted by Pope Paul VI as a distinct body linked to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue; it is composed of the President and Secretary of the Dicastery as well as eight other Consultors. Its task is to study religious relations between Christians and Muslims from different aspects and to promote possible exchange.

Activities of the Council

1. The Council receives many visits from representatives of different religions. Particular importance is given to the meeting with Bishops during their "ad Limina" visits.
2. The President, Secretary as well as other Officials of the Council, travel to different countries to meet followers of other religions with the intent of encouraging better mutual knowledge and collaboration, evaluating the possibility for common initiatives for dialogue. The local Bishops participate as critical resources regarding the situation of the local Churches and opportune initiatives for dialogue.
3. Conferences are regularly scheduled either in Rome or the countries of the affiliated group. The Council also participates in meetings promoted by other bodies, at the regional, national and international levels. These meetings may be bilateral or multilateral.
4. Books and pamphlets have been published on different aspects of interreligious dialogue by the Council, including the Acts of the meetings it organizes. A list of Catholic organisations involved in interreligious dialogue at the national level (Interreligious Directory) is issued by PCID. The Bulletin Pro Dialogo is published regularly and contains significant documents of the Holy Father and the Magisterium on interreligious dialogue, as well as articles from other experts; information on dialogue activities in the world is also included.
5. Created in 1990 the *Nostra Aetate Foundation* has as its aim the promotion of interreligious dialogue through granting scholarships to young people of other religions desiring to deepen their knowledge of Christianity through study at a Pontifical academic institution in Rome. Once finished, they would return to their countries to teach Christianity as well as to engage in interreligious dialogue activities. The Foundation also makes grants in support of local initiatives for promoting interreligious dialogue.

"...every Christian is called to go out to encounter others, to **dialogue** with those who do not think the way we do, with those who have another faith, or who don't have faith. To encounter all because we all have in common our having been created in the image and likeness of God. We can go out to encounter anyone, without fear and without giving up our own belonging."

(Pope Francis - Speech to the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Council for New Evangelization, October 2013)

