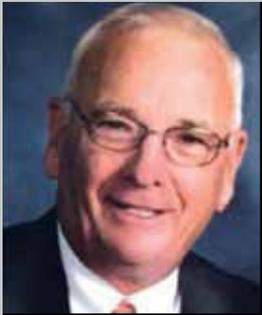




Coping through the Pandemic



Greetings from the Midwest. I pray you and your families are well. I am hearing good things from our NDICE group. Everyone I speak to is active in supporting their parishes as they strive to assist the people stricken

with this COVID-19 or are unemployed because of the lock down and/or are just 'beat' down by the uncertainty facing our great nation. "This too shall pass." I referenced this truism several months ago in another article. It seems it is, albeit, all too slowly. We find many stumbling blocks on the path of life, let us consider this one just another challenge that will make us even stronger.

So much has happened to our neighbors, our country, and our world since the last NDICE Newsletter. Who would have imagined we would be fighting this virus? A fight we are winning, but at what cost? The cost of lives, financial ruin for many and our inability to worship in our churches. There will be good come from this. Just trust in the Lord. As we read in Psalms 69:9, "It is zeal for your house that has consumed me."

I want to recognize many of you who are in the mist of reopening your parishes. I know the deacon directors are extremely busy sharing information. Please feel free to tell your stories, the good, bad, and ugly. We will sanitize them before publishing, as many as we can, in the October issue of NDICE NEWS. Just send them to our Managing Editor, Deacon Gerry at deacon1948@charter.net.

In this June's issue of the NDICE NEWSLETTER, we come to what is now the culmination of over a year's worth of effort from our scheduled

Continued from Page 12 – Coping

PRACTICAL ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS APPLICATIONS FOR PARISH AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Keynote Speaker Fr. Robert Flannery

As we know so well, the Coronavirus Pandemic has changed all our worlds including the plans for the annual NDICE conference this summer. It is not clear at this time if an abbreviated conference will be able to be held this fall. With that in mind, I am including in this article, the jest of the closing address I would have been giving in Cincinnati in July. My article gives specific and concrete applications of how a deacon, his wife, or anyone else can be more readily involved in ecumenical and interreligious relations in their parish and community. I hope you have all enjoyed the presenters I have been asked to select and their articles for this year's theme on "Ecumenism and Interreligious matters and in the life of the Church". We are in this together as children of God!

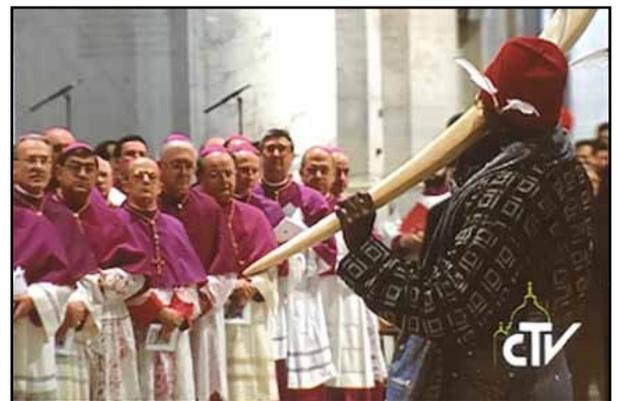
Since the advent of the **Second Vatican Council**, which began in 1962 and ended in 1965, numerous doors have been opened for the Catholic Church to be fully engaged with their ecumenical Christian colleagues as well as to her interfaith and interreligious neighbors and friends.

Saint Pope John XXIII, as he called for an ecumenical council, said that he wanted to open wide the windows of the Church to allow some fresh air to come in.

The result was that **the Holy Spirit breathed on the Church** with the rush

and strength of God's unfathomable and inclusive love! This declaration called and reminded each of us that together we are all sisters and brothers in the human family, created by God in his own image, commissioned to do his will and to witness to his love in everything that we do.

As Catholic leaders—deacons, priests, bishops, women and men religious and lay ecclesial ministers—it is our important obligation and responsibility to foster an understanding of ecumenical and interreligious matters and relations with our lay faithful, so that all of us can live and work together in harmony with those with whom we share God's gift of life in the world.



Ecumenical Gathering at the Vatican

At the end of the Vatican Council, many parishes, pastors, dioceses, bishops and other **Catholic leaders and faithful** were thrilled to begin doing many things together with people from other Christian denominations as well as people of other

Continued on Page 8 – Practical Applications

Jewish- Catholic Relations, Part II

by Rev. Dr. John Pawlikowski, O.S.M.

A related development emerging in biblical scholarship has to do with our picture of the Pharisees. Who of us has not heard a sermon denouncing the Pharisees as the archenemies of Jesus who bitterly opposed him and his teachings? The issue of the Pharisees remains important today given that nearly all forms of Judaism in our day, despite main internal differences, are heirs of the Pharisaic revolution in first century C.E. Judaism. The Pharisees had many different groups which sometimes engaged in bitter exchanges. I often compare their internal exchanges to what takes place during political primaries in this country. Republicans and Democrats often attack members of their party in derisive language.

The 1985 Vatican NOTES on preaching and catechesis in terms of Judaism presents Jesus as closer to the Pharisees than any Jewish movement of the time. Their views on liturgical celebration, the status of the individual believer as a "child of God," ethics, the fatherhood of God and resurrection positively influenced Jesus' preaching and the shape and beliefs of his early disciples.

In the Summer of 2019, a major international conference was organized by the Biblicum in Rome as part of the Gregorian University's anniversary. The papers given at this conference covered the development of Pharisaism, its challenge to the Temple/Sacrificed based version of Judaism by the Sadducees and the impact of Pharisaic thinking on Judaism and the newly arising Christian communities. Pope Francis sent an address to the conference in which he urged Catholics to discard their excessively negative images of the Pharisees and instead come to appreciate their major constructive impact on religious thinking. The scholarly papers and the papal address are available online.

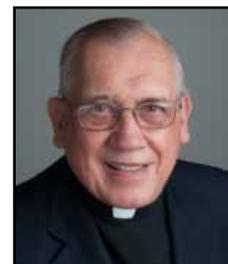
The final major turnabout in terms of Judaism in contemporary biblical scholarship is a challenge to conventional Christian thinking about St. Paul's opposition to Jewish law in favor of spiritual Jewish dialogue has

demonstrated that such an interpretation fails to grasp the full meaning of the Jewish legal tradition which is far richer than the term legalism. Increasingly Pauline scholarship is depicting him as a person who continued to have high regard for Jewish law after his conversion and may have continued to observe it until his death. He just did not want it imposed on non-Jewish converts who had little appreciation for its inherent value. The Book of Acts tends to picture Paul as hostile to Judaism. But this is likely involved some documentary readjustment as the church was turning away from Jerusalem towards Rome. The question of how much Paul continued to embrace Jewish law in his later years remains open subject to additional scholarship. But clearly he did not simplistically turn against it as tradition has tended to paint the picture.

Finally, new scholarship has also grappled with the theological understanding of *Nostra Aetate* and the revolution it has spawned in areas such as Christology, and Ecclesiology. How does the Holocaust, how does the proclamation of continued Jewish covenantal inclusion post-Easter in the new Catholic documents affect traditional notions of Christianity replacing Judaism in the covenantal relationship with God. How can we continue to proclaim the universality of salvation in Christ while at the same time asserting anew the continued validity of the Jewish covenant. Various scholars have taken a shot at responding to these questions though no consensus has been reached regarding a replacement for the supersessionist theology of Jews and Judaism repudiated by Vatican II. St. John Paul II, who wrote more on Catholic-Jewish relations than any pope in history, set a tone in several of his addresses when he asserted that Judaism lies at the very heart of Christianity and that Jews and Christians remained bonded

in a unique relations at the very core of their being. Cardinal Walter Kasper has argued that Christians have been inserted as a branch into the good olive tree that is Judaism and that Jews, if they are faithful to the teachings of Judaism, will achieve salvation. But these are only glimpses into a comprehensive theology of the Church's relationship with Jews and Judaism.

Much work remains in the challenge of creating a new theological template for the Christian-Jewish relationship. Recent Christian-Jewish papal addresses are available online. 



Rev. Dr. John Pawlikowski, O.S.M.

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Who Is My Neighbor? Islam in Our Society

Dr. Noreen Hertzfeld



Muslim/American Immigrants

Who Are American Muslims?

There are an estimated 3 million Muslims in America. Muslims are the youngest faith community in America, with nearly a quarter between the ages of 18-24 years. They are also the more ethnically diverse than any other faith community in America. Three quarters are first or second generation (vs. one quarter of all Americans). But in most ways, Muslims in the US are much the same as the rest of us. Muslim families have an average of 2.4 children. They are as likely to be employed as are Americans as a whole, and, while newly immigrated Muslims

have a slightly lower socio-economic status than the average American, those in the first or second generation generally have a higher status, with a preponderance of doctors, teachers, and engineers.

According to a 2017 Pew Research Center survey, 70% of American Muslims see no conflict between Islam and democracy. The most common reason given by those who saw such a conflict was described by one respondent as a "difference of morals." This echoes the findings of a 2008 Gallop poll of tens of thousands of

U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream."

Muslims around the world, in which the majority said that while they admired the technologies and democracies of the West, what they least admired was a perceived "moral decay and breakdown of traditional values." When asked what they most desired, they mentioned peace, a stable job, and healthy children. Contrary to a common misperception, Muslims were

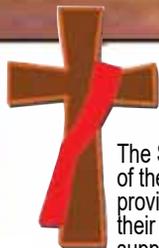
more likely to consider attacks on civilians as morally unjustifiable than Americans. Muslim women wanted equal rights in their religion and in their societies and most responded that, while religious values can serve as a bedrock for legislation, they did *not* want religious leaders crafting laws or constitutions.

These are our neighbors, and they want pretty much the same things most Americans want.

So why Islamophobia?

While 86% of Americans say they want to live in a country where no one is targeted for their faith identity, over 60% of American Muslims report experiencing faith-based discrimination, higher than any other group. This hatred of Muslims has found its way into our schools; 42% of Muslim families with grade school aged children report a child having experienced bullying because of their family's faith. A quarter of those incidents involved a teacher or administrator as the bully.

Continued from Page 4



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Continued from Page 3

Islamophobia is about fear. The U.S. identified roughly 160 Muslim-American terrorist suspects in the decade following 9/11. This is a tiny percentage of the thousands of acts of violence that occur in the United States each year. Yet incidents of Islamic terrorism are what makes the news, creating the impression that most Muslims are violent or support violence. To the contrary, officials note that tips from the Muslim-American community are the largest single source of initial information to authorities about Muslim terror plots. Still, according to a recent study, 90% of US TV news portrayals of Islam and Muslims are negative. Sadly, the religion of our Muslim neighbors has been conflated with the beliefs and actions of a small extremist minority.

The Word "Other" Doesn't Make Sense

When Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden, God placed an angel with a two-edged sword at the gates to guard against their eating from the Tree of Life. Mythologist Joseph Campbell has suggested that the two edges of that sword represent fear and desire, the two driving forces that undergird our "knowledge of good and evil" and drive our actions. According to the Muslim

Sufi tradition, they are also the two forces that keep us from seeing God's face in all people and understanding that we already possess eternal life.

Sufis, adherents to the mystical branch of Islam, radically accept and promote the central concept of unity found in all of Islam. For them,



Muslims with Pope Francis

the One God is the ultimate unity and that unity embraces all of creation. Thus, we humans are part of that oneness, hence, inherently one with each other. The Sufi poet, Hallaj, writes: "People in search of God are wandering on a dark night and they don't find anything except indications. They go toward Him via imagination and assumptions and they ask the skies, "Where is God?" But God is within them."

My hope is that in learning something about the faith of our Muslim neighbors, you have come to see that they are not that different, for, in the end, we all believe in the One God within each of us. Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi, a Persian Sufi master born in 1207, has become in recent years the most popular poet in the US. He writes in hope that our shared belief will overcome the edge of fear our lack of knowledge has placed on the angel's sword:

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right-doing,

There is a field. I'll meet you there.

When the soul lies down in that grass,

The world is too full to talk about.

Ideas, language, even the phrase "each other" Doesn't make sense. ☞

Sources: John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam?: What a Billion Muslims Think*, Gallup Press (2008).



Dr. Noreen Hertzfeld

***From All of the Members of the
Board of Directors & Staff of
N.D.I.C.E.
a reminder to
Pray For One Another
Be Safe as we Re-Open Our Parishes.***

The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist – Conclusion

Deacon Tracy Jamison, PhD



The Christian doctrine of transubstantiation maintains that the inspired authors of the relevant texts in Sacred Scripture (especially Mt 26; Mk 14; Lk 22; Jn 6, Acts 2; and 1 Cor 10-11) intended to assert that in a valid celebration of the Eucharist the physical elements of bread and wine substantially change into the Body and Blood of Christ, even though the accidents of the bread and the wine remain the same. We find this doctrine affirmed by Greek and Latin Church Fathers and taught in the ancient churches of both the East and the West, although the substantial change of the Eucharistic elements into the Body and Blood of Christ is described in terms other than the medieval Latin term “transubstantiation.” There is nothing parochial about the doctrine, and it is not difficult to grasp what it essentially proposes. Every human culture recognizes the common-sense difference between that which exists in itself (a substance) and that which exists in another (an accident). Accidents of substances may be necessary or contingent. In whatever terms are used to assert the substantial change of the Eucharistic elements, though their accidents remain the same, this ancient Christian doctrine always seems incredible to many people, but that natural human reaction did not stop the Catholic Church from defining it as a Christian dogma. In much the same way, the traditional Christian doctrines of God as a Trinity of really distinct Persons who are

in essence only One, of the Incarnation of the second Person of the Trinity as the man Jesus Christ, and of the bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead have always seemed incredible to many people, but these are the beliefs which have been essential to the Christian faith from the very beginning. To be a Christian has always required not only the assent of reason that these doctrines are metaphysically possible but also the assent of faith that they are in fact true. Christians are those who believe that the best explanation of the testimony given by those who knew Jesus personally and died bearing witness to its truth is that Jesus really claimed to be God and that he physically rose from the dead in order to make such an incredible claim credible.

The bodily Resurrection of Jesus is the primary sign and material reason to believe that he is truly God, and the formal reason to believe that he is truly God is that he said so. It is very helpful to recognize that this is the best explanation of the origin of the testimony about Jesus given by his faithful disciples, but the only way to move beyond probability into certainty that the testimony is true is by the illumination and inspiration of the grace of faith. There are other signs which point to the truth of the testimony, but the objective credibility of Christ’s bodily Resurrection is the key to recognizing that he is a divine Person who has assumed a human nature, and that by virtue of his human nature he is substantially

present in the Eucharist. As Benedict XVI emphasizes in *Jesus of Nazareth – Part Two (Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection)*, Christ’s Resurrection was utterly different from the revival of a corpse by medical arts, and even different from the miracles that Christ performed in raising other people from the dead by his own supernatural power. “Christ’s Resurrection is either a universal event, or it is nothing, Paul tells us. And only if we understand it as a universal event, as the opening up of a new dimension of human existence, are we on the way toward any kind of correct understanding of the New Testament Resurrection testimony” (p. 244). Unlike the other miracles of Christ, his own Resurrection changes everything, and he enters into a qualitatively different and everlasting form of life, but one that is still incarnate and present in his human nature. Those who witness his new form of life are neither seeing a ghost nor having a mystical experience. They are witnessing nothing less than a new kind of physical existence that is both within history and at the same time metaphysically above history.

The apostolic doctrines of the Christian faith can be adequately understood only as the product of this personal encounter with Christ in the utterly new form of human existence that his Body and Soul acquired in his Resurrection. This interpretative principle applies equally well to the doctrine of the real physical presence of Christ in the Eucharist. All the apostolic doctrines are conceptually related and should be accepted or rejected together as a substantially unified whole. In the Incarnation, God becomes present not merely like an angel in a human body, nor merely like the power of grace in a prophet, but in a new and radically different form of union, one that is uniquely hypostatic, retaining everything essential to being divine while assuming everything essential to being human. In the Resurrection, God remains physically present in time but opens up a new cosmic dimension within time, one that transcends history

Continued on Page 6 – Eucharist

Eucharist – Continued from Page 5

and makes possible a new and everlasting form of communion between heaven and earth. In the Eucharist, we have a substantial extension of the Incarnation and Resurrection in a radically new and mysterious form of the glorified physical presence of Christ. And in the Church, we have not merely an association of believers but a mystical participation in the ongoing activity of Christ to call people to himself and to teach, sanctify, and shepherd them. Christ is infallible by nature, and he grants to his Church a participation in his infallibility. The qualitatively different form of the substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist can be seen only by the light of faith, but the effects of personal communion with that simultaneously divine and human presence are recognized and appreciated by the faithful who have entered into the liturgical and spiritual life of prayer and have become sensitized to them. In the spiritual development of the virtues of faith, hope, and love through the daily practice of prayer and self-sacrifice for others in imitation of Christ we gradually become fully aware of the different forms of his presence in our lives and thus receive a supernatural confirmation of essential doctrines of the Christian faith.

Such is the reward that Christ promises and gives to those who receive the gift of faith and his divine mysteries and strive to live them out faithfully in a covenant communion with his Sacred Mind and Heart. Some of the truths that are communicated to us by Christ through the apostolic deposit of faith transcend our natural power of understanding. The content that is known by faith is absolutely certain, but it is also obscure, so we must continue to seek better ways to understand it. The objective certainty of faith is also compatible with an occasional involuntary experience of doubt and hesitation. This experience is normal for most if not all who believe the apostolic doctrines of the Christian faith. Our certainty is based on the testimony of God, not on the senses or the intellect. Both faith and reason involve thinking with assent, but the assent of human reason comes naturally from the intellect through evidence, while the assent of divine faith comes supernaturally from the

will through grace. Since the content of the faith always exceeds the natural power of our human intellect to judge whether it is true, we often find the act of faith challenging and sometimes even risky or frightening.

Unfortunately, the natural human resistance to apostolic doctrine was amplified by the false opposition between faith and reason set up by many modern philosophies in the West. In the modern age, reductionistic and inner-cosmic metaphysical theories such as materialism and idealism abandoned and opposed the common-sense form-matter realism of Aristotle and other classical philosophers and granted no room in nature for any kind of divine intervention. Such modern philosophies advanced the Enlightenment assumption that modern mathematical science was incompatible with both the metaphysics of Aristotle and the doctrines of the Christian faith. Christians who accepted that false propaganda were put on the defense, seemingly forced either to sacrifice faith and abandon the traditional doctrines of the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and the Eucharist, or else to sacrifice reason and thus believe that which was admitted to be absurd. Fortunately, it became apparent in the 20th century that the metaphysics of Aristotle and the doctrines of the Christian faith were contrary not to modern science or reason but only to unreasonable modern philosophies such as materialism and idealism. The old Enlightenment dream of an inner-cosmic metaphysics was abandoned, and those who were still committed to the pursuit of truth admitted that modern science itself requires a common-sense realism like that of Aristotle. It turned out that the modern assumptions which made traditional Christian dogmas seem merely metaphorical or absurd also made the dogmas of empirical science seem merely metaphorical or absurd. Every modern metaphysical theory that managed to avoid concluding to the existence of God, the freedom of the human will, and the immortality of the human soul collapsed into relativism about empirical science and linguistic meaning. Contrary to the assumptions of modernity, we discovered that modern science made sense only when we admitted the

existence of God as the transcendent Ultimate Cause of the material cosmos and followed Aristotle in recognizing the immaterial human intellect as the transcendent human power to understand real essences and demonstrate universal scientific laws. Ironically, the same common-sense form-matter realism that was the medieval foundation for understanding the nature of the Church and its sacraments is now being used to explain and defend the nature of human language and the empirical sciences.

In the practice of religion, everything hangs on whether the prevailing metaphysical assumptions of the culture permit God to create matter and energy from absolutely nothing and then to be really present and active in the material cosmos. In our new postmodern age in the West, where many people are turning to relativism and losing their faith in both science and religion, the time has come to reconsider and reassess the traditional Christian doctrine of transubstantiation, which is no more contrary to reason than are the Christian doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection. These doctrines presuppose only the light of faith and the spontaneous intellectual distinctions of the natural realist attitude that undergirds both common sense and natural science in every age and culture. One clear lesson in the modern history of the West is that philosophical and theological theories which do not allow for the metaphysical possibility of the Body and Blood of Christ to be substantially present under the appearances of bread and wine also do not allow for the divine Person of Christ to assume a human nature in the first place or to resurrect any human body from the dead. The traditional Christian doctrines stand or fall together. The more surprising conceptual relation is that modern reductionistic philosophies which undermine the Christian faith also undermine modern science and ordinary human reason. The question that must now be asked in our new postmodern age of metaphysical possibilities is whether the traditional doctrine of the Eucharist as a supernatural act which invisibly transforms

Continued on Page 7 – Eucharist

Continued from Page 6 –Eucharist

one material substance into another material substance is any less probable than the Incarnation or Resurrection itself. In order to assess the probability of the doctrine properly, we should follow the example of St. John Henry Newman and correctly apply the signs offered by St. Vincent of Lérins in the *Commonitorium* on the basis of Aristotle's rules for dialectical investigations: that which has been believed everywhere, always, by all (*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*). When we also recognize the principle of dogmatic development, likewise offered by St. Vincent of Lérins, together with the primacy of the living Tradition of the Church, we have the criterion that we need in order to discern which explanation of the Eucharist is the most probable. And if we still have a personal aversion to that explanation, then must ask ourselves whether our aversion is grounded in a good objective reason to doubt the doctrine or is perhaps rather the psychological remnant of a modern subjective bias.

The only path to certainty lies through the infallibility of the Catholic Church, which is an organic relation between the beliefs of faithful as a whole and the doctrines of the Magisterium and the authors of Sacred Scripture. The infallibly taught dogma of transubstantiation is a case in point and a good illustration of the more general principle for choosing between competing Christian doctrines on a particular issue. Just as the infallibility of the supernatural sense of the faith is manifested by the unanimity of the practicing Catholic faithful in what they believe, the infallibility of the ordinary and universal Magisterium is likewise manifested by the unanimity and universality (i.e. consensus) of the teaching of Catholic bishops through time. Only the Magisterium can infallibly judge whether a true consensus of bishops exists with regard to any given doctrine taught with the proper exercise of the charism of truth. The Catholic Church claims to teach and believe a true science which she has received from God. Such supernatural revealed knowledge needs infallible solemn definitions for absolute certainty, just as natural scientific knowledge needs infallible scientific demonstrations for absolute certainty. All people experience the

intellectual need for certainty and infallibility in religion insofar as they recognize their personal and cultural insufficiency for believing religious truth without error. The reality of the participated infallibility of the Church corresponds to a true intellectual and religious need of the human person and human society for objective revealed truth and certainty. This relevance is one reason why the infallibility of the Catholic Church is credible insofar as it claims to be the divine solution and satisfaction of a genuine human problem and need. Of course, the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church itself is formally believed because of the graced recognition that it carries the authority of divine revelation, not merely because of any motives of credibility. But God does provide various motives of credibility for the doctrine, as a preamble to believing it, and thus is the way paved to the gift of the Catholic faith.

Those who have already received the gift of the Catholic faith and are experiencing some involuntary doubts about a particular Catholic dogma such as the real and substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist are called by Christ to prefer the Church's judgment to their own. As Catholic Christians we are called to form our conscience so that it becomes certain and correct. While it is true that conscience ought to be followed whenever it is certain, even if it is incorrect, it is also true that conscience ought not to be followed whenever it is doubtful. By the principles of natural moral law, we must let our conscience be our guide whenever it is certain, but we must not let our conscience be our guide whenever it is doubtful. We are thus morally obligated by natural law to avoid acting from a doubtful conscience, e.g. when we suspect but are uncertain that a particular act is morally right or wrong. Catholics who are doubtful about what the Church teaches can in most circumstances easily find out, and they are morally obligated to do so. To divinely revealed truths which are solemnly defined as such, we owe the internal assent of theological faith. To virtually revealed truths which follow by logical or historical necessity from the immediate deposit of faith and the natural moral law and are universally and infallibly taught, we owe the internal assent of ecclesiastical faith. To authentic interpretations of the deposit of

faith and the natural moral law, taught either universally or by particular bishops, we owe the religious and internal assent of mind and heart. In a few cases a Catholic's ignorance of Church teaching is invincible and inculpable, meaning that he or she has made an adequate and reasonable effort to know a doctrine and has failed to know it, but this is very rare. Since the Catholic Church participates in the infallibility of Christ in its teachings, Catholic Christians have judgments of conscience which are objectively much more certain than anyone else's judgments of conscience. Except in rare cases where a Catholic is invincibly and inculpably ignorant of Church teaching, it is impossible for a Catholic to have a conscience which is certain but opposed to the infallible teaching of the Church. In other words, if a person does have a conscience which is certain but opposed to the infallible teaching of the Church, then he or she is objectively not in full communion with the Church. If we knowingly and voluntarily choose to doubt infallible doctrines, then we place ourselves in schism. Unless excused by invincible ignorance, a person who is fully Catholic can never have any probable doubt about an infallible teaching of the Church, because by faith he or she recognizes the divine authority of the teaching and thus also recognizes its objective certainty. Furthermore, since a Catholic is someone who believes that the teaching of the Church regarding faith and morals is infallible or at least certain, his or her own judgment of conscience cannot be certain if it does not agree with the judgment of the Church, because lack of agreement with the Church constitutes a probable doubt. A Catholic can never be certain, for example, that Christ is not substantially present in a valid Eucharist. To be a Catholic Christian has always required the assent of faith that the infallible and authentic teachings of the Church are objectively more certain than personal judgments of conscience. 



Deacon Tracy Jamison, Ph.D.



Jerusalem, City sacred to the three monotheistic faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Continued from Page I – Practical Applications world religions--activities that were not allowed to take place before the onset of Vatican Council II. We had failed to realize and remember all that we have in common—much more than what divides us!

There is a **basic ecumenical premise and guideline** which arose from the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. It is a key and important Commission to which the Catholic Church is a member. The document from this group is entitled **the Lund Principle** and it originated at the Commission's meeting in Lund, Sweden in 1952. It affirms that churches should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately. This is a concept and principle which can be applied to many of our contemporary relations with people of other faith traditions today.

Following is a variety of ways in which this principle can be employed in our day to day walk with our brothers and sisters of other faith traditions. Let us begin with our own liturgical calendar which is the same or similar to many of the mainline Christian churches.

Advent: Why not have an **ecumenical Advent wreath making activity** for youth, families or senior adults? Many of

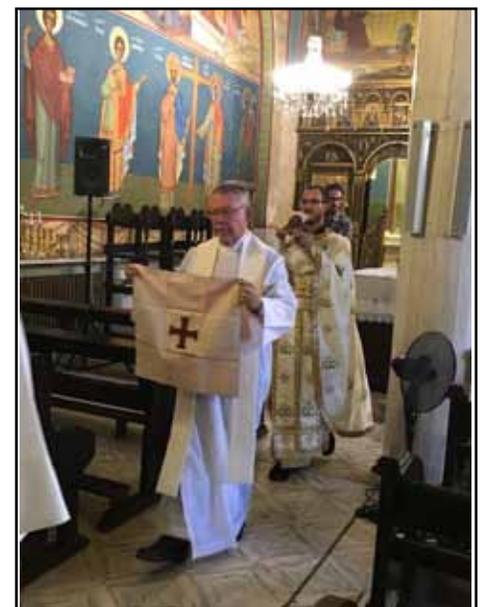
us have **Christian neighbors from other denominations**. This would be a great way to recognize our common preparation for the Coming of Our Savior in Time, but also at the end of Time. If one denomination uses the color, blue, for the candles and another purple, so be it! In my parish, a couple originally from Germany uses red candles. This is an opportunity to share and learn from each other what the reason or significance is about the color being used. Also, consider doing **Advent Evensong, Evening Prayer, or Bible Study** with another or another Christian church or churches. If you are not able to do all the four Sundays or weeks of Advent, even one time would be a nice ecumenical experience for those involved. How about an ecumenical youth group caroling and going to nursing homes or around neighborhoods? My community, and likely yours, has a Giving Tree or Spirit of Christmas outreach that is ecumenically based helping children and people in need at Christmas.

Christmas: In a number of communities that I have served over my forty-seven years of priesthood, we regularly have people from other Christian denominations, or those Catholics who we do not see regularly, come to the late evening Christmas Eve Service or another Mass time on Christmas Day. Be sure to **welcome them with open arms!** If

your family (spouse, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, etc.) is of another denomination, what about on some years after you have attended Catholic Mass, accompany them to their Protestant or Orthodox church at Christmas or another time of the year. No—we cannot share communion at this time in history. Hopefully when our major differences are worked through we will eventually be able to do so—but **we can still pray together at a Christian service** celebrating God's holy Word in community!

New Year's Eve and Day: One of my great memories of the beginning of the Third Millennium was having an **Evening Prayer Service on New Year's Day** praying for peace and harmony in the world. Since I live in a university community, besides many Christian denominations, we also had people from some of the other world religions—Jews, Muslims, Baha'i, Hindu, and Buddhist, Unitarian—who came together praying God's blessing on our lives and world.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is January 18th to 25th each year. An ecumenical prayer service, prayer cards,



Melkite Catholic Patriarchate, Old City Jerusalem. July 2019

posters, and a Scripture reflection for each day can be obtained through the Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute. The Graymoor Friars began the Week of Prayer observance a hundred and ten years ago and it is co-sponsored by the Vatican and the

World Council of Churches. If for some reason a community cannot celebrate The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January because of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. observances (another opportunity to commemorate ecumenically and/or interreligiously!), or another reason, **the Week of Prayer is appropriate for other times of the year** such as Pentecost. I have often taken just a part of the Prayer Service and used it at a Parish Pastoral Council meeting, the Women or men's group, even for grade school or high school students. It's a chance to catechize all of our parishioners and the people in our other Catholic institutions.

Lent: When I first arrived in my present parish, an interim Presbyterian pastor called one day in early February asking if I had any ashes she could use for the upcoming Ash Wednesday service she was preparing for her congregation. At a Clergy Brown Bag luncheon the next day, I mentioned the request and all of the mainline Protestant pastors including a Baptist pastor and a Unitarian minister, said they would like to be part of a **palm-burning service together** where we would mix the ashes from our last year's palms and have "ecumenical ashes" to distribute to our various congregants! A picture of the service we held was on the front page of the local newspaper with a nice article describing how it came about. It went over so well that we do it every year.

We even come together on the Saturday morning of Palm Sunday weekend, and **bleed our palms from the various Christian congregations in town** and mention that we did so in our homilies or sermons that weekend. **In some other communities**, two different Christian churches properties may border each other or are close by. They bless the palms together before their service begins (Palm Sunday Processional Rite) and then process to their respective churches for their regular Mass or Service. Of course, this necessitates having a good and ongoing relationship with your neighboring church in your community in order to have the rapport to do so.

Many communities and ministerial alliances hold morning or evening **Bible Studies** during Lent with a simple breakfast or soup meal in

the evening, perhaps with or without a Prayer Service attached. In the community I have lived in for some years now, the Lutherans, Episcopalians and Catholics have a close ongoing relationship. Each Lent we have a soup meal following Evening Prayer the middle five Wednesdays of Lent. One year as the three of us pastors were looking at our Lenten schedules, I discovered I already, by mistake, had booked a Lenten Penance Service on a Wednesday. The Episcopal priest, said, "that's okay, can we join you?" The Lutheran pastor thought for a moment and replied, "that sounds like a great idea." So what we did was have our Catholic parish's regular communal **Lenten Penance Service:** Opening Hymn, Liturgy of the Word, Homily, Examination of Conscience, Act of Contrition, and Lord's Prayer. At that point in the service—with six areas for confessors (four Catholic priests, one Episcopalian priest, and one Lutheran pastor)—penitents from the difference parishes/congregations **would go to their respective pastor** to confess their sins, receive absolution and receive a common penance. Then we concluded the service with a sign of peace, a concluding prayer, blessing

It's a chance to catechize all of our parishioners on other faith communities.

and final hymn. We did this for several years, but with a change in some of the clergy and other circumstances discontinued the practice, hoping to do it again in the future. In case you did not know, Episcopalians have the Sacrament of Penance and Lutherans confess their sins to their pastor on Maundy Thursday and at other times as well.

Holy Week: While most Christian denominations observe **Holy or Maundy Thursday**, it is not a day in which **unfortunately we can celebrate together** due to our differences in the understanding of the Real Presence. Lutherans, Episcopalians, Orthodox Christians do have similar if not the same beliefs in the Real Presence as we do. Apostolic succession is not an issue for us with the Orthodox Church, but since they do not allow us to receive the Eucharist in their churches, out of respect for their practice, we do not offer the Eucharist to them, but

certainly could. However, there are a few Orthodox or other Churches which we do allow intercommunion—including the Assyrian Orthodox Church of the East and the Polish National Church.

Traditionally, many Christian denominations conduct some type of **Good Friday** service together. In one community I lived in, we held an ecumenical Good Friday evening service. One year, when it was our turn to host the event, we conducted the **Stations of the Cross** in our Catholic Church. The Protestant pastors and parishioners seemed to be very inspired by the service which was new to most of them. As you know, some communities conduct a **living Stations of the Cross** frequently walking around to places where poverty or injustice are present. Usually, this occurs in larger town or metropolitan areas.

Easter Sunday: I was in a town where there was an **Easter Sunrise Service** at dawn. Obviously, this was a challenge for me since the night before we had held our beautiful, but long Easter Vigil when we welcomed new members into the Church. However, I still attended the ecumenical Easter sunrise service the next morning, because I was in relationship with the other clergy and community members there. Also, I loved the early morning breakfast food we enjoyed together! Ecumenical and interreligious services for that matter, bring out great cooks and chefs!!

Ascension: In 1999, the **Lutheran-Catholic Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ)** was officially signed at a ceremony held in Augsburg, Germany with the President of the Lutheran World Federation and the President of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity being the signatories. Observances of the occasion were held in many communities around the world, including my own. The following year, wanting to continue our special and unique relationship with our Evangelical Lutheran Church of American (ELCA) friends, our two parishes decided to come together each **Ascension THURSDAY for Evening Prayer** since my diocese is one of the majority of dioceses in our country which observes the Feast of the Ascension on a Sunday, transferring

it in place of the Seventh Sunday of Easter. We hold the prayer service each year, except for missing it this year due to the COVID-19 stay at home restrictions. Since our community also has a strong covenant relationship with the local Episcopal parish, soon after we started the Ascension Evening Prayer Service, we invited them to join us. We alternate locations, preachers, and share our gifts of refreshment goodies together.

One year, when the Orthodox Easter coincided with the Western Church's date, we invited the local **Orthodox Church** to join us as well for the Ascension Service since they, too, have a liturgical church tradition. In places where the Eastern Orthodox Church is present, it is important, out of respect and courtesy, to wish them a Happy Easter (or better yet: **Christ is Risen!** on the dates they observe Easter as well as Christmas. This is a sign of fraternal charity as we continue to pray especially for a common date for Easter, the greatest feast of the Church.

Pentecost: A **Pentecost Ecumenical Evening Prayer** is most appropriate and is a perfect setting for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity if it has not been done earlier the end of January. A regular Evening Prayer Service would also be perfect.

Vacation Bible School: Some smaller communities do an Ecumenical Vacation Bible School since the children are usually on the younger side and the activities are based on the Scriptures and are Christ centered. This can really help out in small towns where the number of children may be fewer and combined resources a great blessing.

The summer civil holidays—Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day—can afford opportunities for religious services, socials, picnics and outings depending on your area and circumstances.

Thanksgiving: The annual Thanksgiving Service is a tradition in most communities where there is a mixture of Christian denominations. For larger metropolitan areas, university communities and some other settings it might take the form of an Interreligious Service from various world religions. In some places it takes

place the night before Thanksgiving, or the Sunday afternoon/evening before, another day of that week, or in my university setting, the week earlier before the students and professors leave town. In my college community, it is an **Interfaith or Interreligious Service** where Baha'i, Buddhists, Christians (Anglicans, Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants), Jews, Muslims, Mormons, and Native American Indians faiths come together for music, prayers, Scripture from their traditions, blessings, listening to a noted speaker from the area, and the opportunity to give a donation to a local charity, followed by a reception provided by the local hospital system's community outreach department.

Interfaith definition and opportunities: (technologically, **Jewish, Christian, and Muslim** believers who are People of the Book), it is good to wish our sisters and brothers of these other traditions well on their special feasts, holy days, or holidays. This does not mean that we have to consent to the same beliefs, but, out of human respect and the respect for religious liberty (the document decided upon at Vatican II), we acknowledge "the other" out of human decency. For our Jewish friends, with our obvious deep connection with Jesus who was a Jew, we wish them a Happy Hanukkah or Rosh Hashanah, We invite members of these communities to some of our own special days as well, or other events not of a religious nature. We do the same for our Muslim brothers and sisters, wishing them a holy Ramadan, and accepting, if invited, to join them for the closing of that great feast, Eid. When three years ago there was a great concern for the Muslim community after the administration's travel ban, five hundred people were invited to the local mosque for a dinner and fellowship to show our solidarity. People from all faith traditions were among the participants.

Interreligious definition: This technical term refers to all religions working together: Christian, Jew, Hindu, Muslim, Taoist, Shinto, Buddhist, Mormon, and so forth. In my local community, I sometimes go to the annual Hindu Feast of Lights as well as Mormon socials or Buddhist events. **Interchurch** is between Christian Churches. **Ecumenical** is also

technically within Christian Churches.

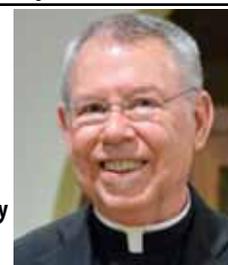
Coupled with these ecumenical and interreligious spiritual and fellowship activities is the even larger **faith communities' social outreach** to the poor, the homeless, those in prison or immigrant detention centers, concern for refugees, food pantries, soup kitchens, thrift stores, shawl knitting ministries, warming centers, peace coalitions, transitional housing and shelters, to name just a few. Working together collaboratively with our faith partners means not only more help for those we assist, but also creates closer relationships of trust and affirmation by those with whom we minister in cooperation with local civic leaders. This is certainly true with our civic leaders who come from these various faith traditions and who help us work more closely together with our local congregations and communities.

I realize my article has been a lengthy one. **Thank you** for persevering with it. I wanted to give you some concrete examples to be aware of and to possibly try yourselves. My examples are only a few that I have experienced personally or of which I have heard about. There are many more, and I hope you create many of your own. My main point is for us to continue to follow the call for Christian Unity for which Jesus prayed himself, and to also build relationships with people of other religions in our world. If we do not know the other, we will likely fear or disrespect the other because of the unknown or ignorance. Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs are about **"relationships"**. Let us continue to build them together, for indeed, we are all God's beloved children! 🙏

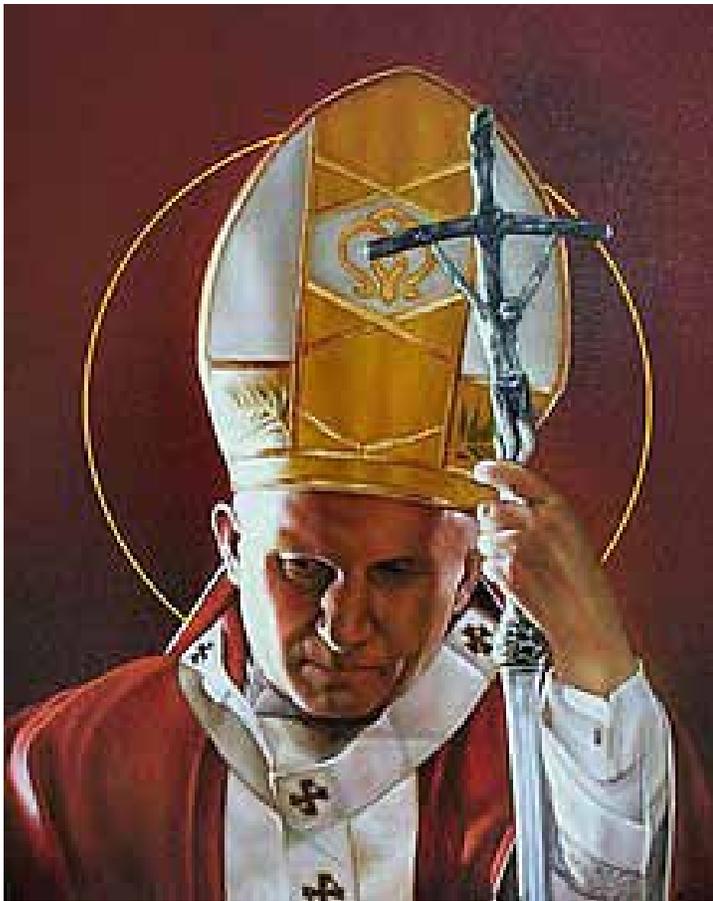
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Father Robert Flannery



“Happy Birthday To You Ut Unum Sint!”



Many of you may know that this month we observed the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of our Polish pontiff-saint of the last century, Pope St. John Paul II. There is another anniversary that may not have been as publicized but nevertheless is important, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the promulgation of Pope St. John Paul II's encyclical on ecumenism, *Ut Unum Sint*. The title is the phrase, “that they may be one,” taken from the prayer of our Lord in the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel. Pope St. John Paul II was highly influential in the writing of the original documents of the Second Vatican Council and invested much of his life in promoting its vision. While still a prelate in Poland he was one of the few bishops in that time who developed a concrete plan of pastoral implementation of the reforms of the Council. *Ut Unum Sint* would not only be Pope St. John Paul II's reflections upon the progress that was made in ecumenical relations since the promulgation of *Unitatis Redintegratio* but also his attempt to seriously look at the theological and pastoral implications of the

Decree on Ecumenism, bringing the Catholic Church and her new ecumenical partners to an even deeper level of relationality and Church unity.

One of the aspects of *Ut Unum Sint* which receives a great deal of attention is that Pope St. John Paul II acknowledged in it that one of the major if not most contentious of issues for all of our ecumenical partners is the role and place of the papacy. Historically, however, it should be noted that this tension was first acknowledged by his predecessor, Paul VI, in the encyclical

Ecclesiam Suam (110), a document which oriented the Church toward the *novo modo contigando* of dialogue which characterizes so much of the Post-Conciliar theology and engagements of the Catholic Church from the Council forward. Both pontiffs made the point that while the emphasis on the role of the Bishop of Rome distinguishes the Catholic Church from all other Christian churches and ecclesial communities we as Catholics believe that this role is indispensable for the life of the Church and is willed by Christ Himself. Both pontiffs expressed a desire to enter into further study and reflection upon the role of the Papacy for the life of the Church in an ecumenical age. However, Pope St. John Paul II went one step further by seriously inviting our ecumenical partners into the conversation about the exercise of Papal primacy. He invited Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Christians, with their unique perspectives and corporate historical experiences of interactions with the papacy that were not always positive, to

contribute to a renewal of the ways in which the authority of the Apostle Peter is exercised today. He expressed this invitation with a highly pastoral tone: “I am convinced that I have a particular responsibility... in acknowledging the ecumenical aspirations of the majority of the Christian Communities and in heeding the request made of me to find a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation” (95). Twenty five years later one can observe the theological fruits of this special invitation. There were a number of Christian communities and Churches that accepted the offer to reflect upon what type of role, if any, the Bishop of Rome might have in service to all Christians. The House of Bishops of the Church of England published an “Occasional Paper” in 1997 entitled, “That They May Be One: A Response of the House of Bishops of the Church of England to ‘*Ut Unum Sint*.’” The Conference of the Bishops of the Lutherans of the Church of Sweden soon after formulated a substantive response that both praised John Paul's openness while at the same time pointed out challenges. In 2001 the Presbyterian Church USA's General Assembly officially received a paper entitled “The Successor to Peter” by theologians Anna Case-Winters and Lewis Mudge. The Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church in 2007 unanimously approved “Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church: Ecclesial, Communion, Conciliarity and Authority” which rather strikingly pointed out that the Bishop of Rome in the first nine centuries of the Church, in the context of collegiality, was acknowledged as the “*protos* among the patriarchs.” This invitation by John Paul II was also picked up by numerous individual theologians and other ecumenical organizations over the course of these past twenty five years. None of these theological reflections have come to a complete resolution of all of the issues but they have set the course of meaningful dialogues, dialogues that has much more potential than many would have

thought possible twenty five years ago.

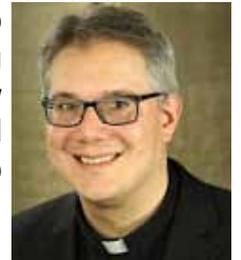
One can observe in the life and ministry of Pope Francis a successor of St. Peter who does not hesitate, when necessary, to exercise a service of charity in the name of worldwide Christianity. This is a service that stretches even beyond the boundaries of the Catholic Church. On March 25, 2020, Pope Francis invited all Christians throughout the entire world to pray the Lord's Prayer together for an end to the pandemic. It was an ecumenically sensitive initiative that used a prayer that is loved by all Christians and was phrased as an invitation as opposed to an authoritative command. Our partners from the Episcopalian, Lutheran, and Methodist traditions publicly affirmed and accepted his invitation. Expanding his service even further, when the Higher Committee for Human Fraternity of the United Arab Emirates (which was formed after Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar signed the Document on Human Fraternity in

2019) called on all the world to fast, pray, and perform works of charity on May 14, 2020 for an end to the pandemic, Pope Francis added his own voice of invitation and affirmation. This was another highly sensitive action of the Bishop of Rome, phrased as an invitation, and allowing for individuals to make their own choices regarding the type of prayer, fasting, and/or work of charity their own consciences would allow. This offered enough latitude for the adherents of all major world religions to be able to participate.

The current state of affairs reflects how far we have come in our ecumenical and interreligious relationships over the course of the past twenty five years. If it was not for the enthusiasm and vision expressed in *Ut Unum Sint* it is highly unlikely that Pope Francis would have been as comfortable in offering these expansive invitations and even more unlikely that they would have been received favorably by so many. As we come to know and appreciate

the gifts that all Christian communities have to offer each other and the world we will come closer to allowing the Lord to make us One in Him.

The examples Paul VI, John Paul II, and Francis offer to us reflect an openness to dialogue and a capacity to serve the other as the other feels comfortable being served. This is an excellent point of reflection for the deacon. As a deacon, your role may not be understood by all, nor might it even be accepted. Our answer must not be to retreat into ourselves or our own communities of Faith. Our answer must be to humbly serve, asking with John Paul II the question, "In what way might you envision yourself allowing me to serve you?" Beginning in that way is surely a path to a sure and steady gateway to genuine *diakonia*. 🙏



Rev. Walter Kedjerski,
Ph.D

Coping Continued from Page 1

presenters and your NDICE staff, leading up to our now COVID-19 cancelled July 2020 conference. I cannot thank them enough for their dedication to NDICE and the work they put into their articles. We owe them a huge thank you. I think you will find their concluding commentaries on Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue along with final comments on the 'Real Presence,' significantly beneficial to our mission of service to the universal church. My only regret is we will not be able to hear and visit with them this year at Xavier University. I know I speak for your entire board of directors; we miss being with all of you, too. Meanwhile, 'this too shall pass.'

I encourage you to read closely and pick out some 'gems' from each of the following articles. I found in Fr. Pawlikowski's article the quote from St John Paul II, "...Judaism lies at the very heart of Christianity and that Jews and Christians remained bonded in a unique relation at the very core of their being," contains so many implications for me. I have often commented with others that our Jewish grandparents (my term) have much to share with Christians.

Who Is My Neighbor? Dr. Noreen Herzfeld's article on Islam in our society addresses a question I have always grappled with, who is my neighbor? The author's article can apply to many in our society today and not just our Muslim neighbor's. I connect with the 2008 Gallop poll she cited, that what Muslims least admired about the Western democracies was a perceived, "moral decay and breakdown of traditional values." Who could argue with that? The question to me is, "What are we doing about it? Are we reaching out to our neighbors who do not look like us or talk like us? Are we helping our neighbors or are we just standing on the sideline? I challenge us to give that some thought.

Deacon Tracy's article, addressing 'The Real Presence' is an excellent conclusion to his series. All the articles are worth revisiting and they can be found on our webpage at NDICE.net. Dr. Jamison's concluding paragraph is clear, "doubt is fine." But we should doubt on the side of the Church's judgement to our own. An immensely helpful article for me personally.

Fr. Walter challenges us to deliberate on Pope St. John Paul II's encyclical, "that they

may be one," and "... to reflect on openness to dialogue and a capacity to serve the other as the other feels comfortable being served." Finally, Fr. Bob Flannery gives us specific and concrete applications on how we can be more involved in ecumenical and interreligious relations in our communities. I suggest you can not digest this newsletter in one setting. Take your time, underline, makes notes in the margins, then go back and read everything again.

I encourage you to share the NDICE Newsletter with your catechetical leaders and others who may benefit from the articles on Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue and the understanding of the "Real Presence." Please use our newsletter to help spread the Word of God. I also encourage you to support our advertisers who help fund this 'free' newsletter.

Lastly, your NDICE Officers and Staff will be meeting this month (June) to discuss the 2021 NDICE Conference. The Xavier University facilities have already been reserved for the third weekend in July 2021. Please plan on joining us there. Until we meet again.

Peace – Deacon John