

Encounters in Ecumenism

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Ecumenism and Social Justice

There is a strong relationship between ecumenism and social justice. Theological debate may have divided us initially but Christ's message of love in action can be the start of reuniting us. As St. Thomas Aquinas challenged us, we must continue our search for truth while remembering that love takes up where knowledge leaves off (Summa Theologica).

Our love for justice must, however, be genuine. As Isaiah questioned, 'Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?' Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day, and oppress all your workers.'" (Isaiah 58:3).

In other words, to truly love, we must walk the talk. This we can do with our Christian brethren at the community level. In the words of St Francis, together and with love we can become channels of God's peace.

During Lent the Church encourages to fast. There are many ways of fasting. According to Isaiah, "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?" (Isaiah 58: 6-7).

We have developed our own ways of doing this by ourselves through Catholic organizations such as the CWL, Knights of Columbus and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Our challenge to you during this Lenten period is to reach out to other denominations in your neighbourhood to work together to meet a specific need in your community. It could be a joint youth project, a neighbourhood clean-up project or a joint bottle drive for a specific charity. By sincerely and prayerfully inviting our Christian brothers and sisters to work together for a common community need, we can start and continue our journey towards ecumenism.



Scripture to contemplate

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in. Isaiah 58: 9-12

Question to ponder:

How can we involve other churches to help identify and address some of the needs in our community?

Ecumenism in Action

Share ecumenical/interfaith activities happening in your parish. Deadline: 5th of each month. .
E-mail Fr. James at ecumenism@rcdiocese-calgary.ab.ca or call 218-5521

Chair of Christian Thought (UofC) – Prof. Joseph Wawrykow on St. Thomas Aquinas. Monday, February 1 at 7:30 pm at St. Gerard's Catholic Church (8944 Elbow Dr. SW), and Tuesday, February 2 at 12 noon in the Bianca Room, MacEwan Student Centre, University of Calgary.

Commission Members

Fr. Avinash Colaco – Vice-Chair, Deacon Gary Haney, Harry Ziel, Fr. James Hagel – Director, Joel Christie, Leslie Padula – Chair, Maureen Condon Horon, Mike Heimbecker.