

Q. What does the church think of each of the many other world religions?

A. The short answer to your question is...it depends upon which religion, and which aspect of that religion you are talking about! Let me give you two guiding teachings of our Church. First, it's important to know that we, as Catholics, do not reject anything that is true in other world religions. Generally speaking, the various religions of the world founded throughout time and in various cultures were formed to help answer many of the most fundamental questions of human life. What is the meaning of life? Why are we here? Is there an afterlife? What is the moral good? Where does evil come from? All of these questions arise in our minds and hearts regardless of what age, culture or religious background we are born into. Therefore, it is very understandable that, from the beginning of time, there have been various attempts at answering these questions through religious means. When we look at the various religions of the world, we certainly find truths within them. Some profess a belief in one God. Some teach that we should seek the moral good. Some teach that we have a spiritual soul and should prepare ourselves for the afterlife. All of these teachings are consistent with what we believe as Catholics. Thus, anything we find to be true in other religions we applaud and support wholeheartedly.

But with that said, there is another very important guiding principle to understand. Namely, we, as Catholics, believe that of all the many religions, the fullness of the truth is found in the Catholic Church. What does this mean? It means that even though there may be elements of truth in other religions, there is no religion that is more complete in its understanding of life, morality and truth than the Catholic faith. Along with that truth, it's also important to understand that we accept only one Savior of all! This means that for everyone, be they Hindu, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, etc., the only way to Heaven is Jesus Christ! Therefore, if a follower of another religion obtains the glorious gift of eternal salvation it can only come from the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Savior of all mankind.

So what do we think of other religions? We applaud all that is good and true in them. But we also acknowledge the ultimate Truth of God revealed in its fullness in our own Catholic faith. In fact, it should be our wholehearted desire that all people, of every time, culture and religion, come to know Christ Jesus as He is revealed to us most fully in the Catholic Church.