

# Operation Neighborhood Ecumenism

## From the Catechism of the Catholic Church

*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. This is why Jesus himself prayed at the hour of his Passion, and does not cease praying to his Father, for the unity of his disciples: "That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us, . . . so that the world may know that you have sent me." (CCC820)*

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

*--a permanent **renewal** of the Church in greater fidelity to her vocation; such renewal is the driving-force of the movement toward unity;*

*--**conversion of heart** as the faithful "try to live holier lives according to the Gospel"; for it is the unfaithfulness of the members to Christ's gift which causes divisions;*

*--**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;'"*

*--**fraternal knowledge of each other**;*

*--**ecumenical formation** of the faithful and especially of priests;*

*--**dialogue** among theologians and meetings among Christians of the different churches and communities;*

*--**collaboration** among Christians in various areas of service to mankind.*

*"Human service" is the idiomatic phrase. (CCC821)*

*Concern for achieving unity "involves the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike." But we must realize "that this holy objective -- the reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ -- transcends human powers and gifts." That is why we place all our hope "in the prayer of Christ for the Church, in the love of the Father for us, and in the power of the Holy Spirit." (CCC822)*

Vatican II has challenged us all to foster ecumenism that leads toward true unity.

Every baptized Christian participates in what Cardinal Arinze of the Pontifical Council on Inter-religious Dialogue has called the "Spirituality of Dialogue".

Operation Neighborhood Ecumenism is meant to be a grass roots ecumenical dialogue. The simple steps below are a way to live Jesus' prayer "that they may all be one."

If you wish to start a ONE ministry in your parish contact your pastor and the Ecumenical Office in your diocese. Here in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe you can reach the Ecumenical Office by phone at 505.831.8243 or by email at [ecumenical@archdiocesasantafe.org](mailto:ecumenical@archdiocesasantafe.org).

1. Gather a core group of Catholics from your parish who want to foster greater ecumenical understanding and who are willing to commit themselves to prayer, study, and dialogue. (Groups should be at least 12 people and no more than 20. A parish could have several groups as numbers grow.) Fill out form below and send to your parish pastor and the Ecumenical Office in your diocese.
2. Explore your parish's territory. Ask your parish office for the parochial boundaries north, south, east, & west (these will usually be streets). Have your group survey the parish's territory for various churches, temples, synagogues, and mosques that might be in your parish territory. Identify the major Christian denominations. [In the ecumenical dialogue we find there are different levels of commonality or agreement. Some denominations the Catholic Church earnestly works toward full communion, while others we work toward greater understanding at this time. You may find that some "churches" are not Christian.]
3. Learn about each denomination in your parish. Libraries, parish resource centers, and the internet are great ways to find out about different denominations. Check out the link to "Ecumenical Resources" on the Ecumenical Offices homepage ([click here](#)). Take care to use good resources, those published or sponsored by the denomination itself. Some, like the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodist, share many things in common with the Roman Catholic Church while others do not. Study the Church's teaching on these important differences. See how your core group now understands ecumenism. Once you have fostered a healthy understanding in your core group begin to reach out to other denominations in genuine ecumenical dialogue. [See the paragraph #821 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to see what it says about *renewal, conversion of heart, prayer in common, fraternal knowledge of each other, ecumenical formation, dialogue, and collaboration*.]
4. Visit the other churches. Arrange to meet regularly with members of the various denominations. It is easier to dialogue with one denomination at a time. This is called bi-lateral dialogue and is very helpful.
5. Pray with and for one another. Hold a regular day of prayer for Christian Unity and invite all denominations to gather as those baptized in Christ. These kinds of gatherings are multi-lateral and convey a sense of our common heritage. [*A format for such a day might be: Start with a gathering song, followed by a*

*communal recitation of the Creed, silence, followed by a song of praise, shared spontaneous prayer, followed by the Our Father and Sign of Peace, concluded with a song of mission.]*

6. On-going study and dialogue. As your ONE ministry develops you can sponsor regular times to get together, study and pray with various denominations multi-laterally. [*Many mainstream Christian churches share a common lectionary which has the readings used on Sundays. You could come together and share the upcoming readings, or talk about last Sunday's readings and what the various messages that were preached on by your different pastors.*]
7. For more ideas go the link "Things We Can Do" (click here).

## Resources:

*Nostra Aetate* (1964) available online at:

[www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html)

*Unitatis redintegratio* (1964) and *Ut unum sint* (1995) available online at:

[www.papalencyclicals.net/all.htm](http://www.papalencyclicals.net/all.htm)

Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism (1993) available online at:

<http://www.cin.org/vatcong/direcum.html>

Archdiocese of Santa Fe Guidelines for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (1996)

# Operation Neighborhood Ecumenism

Parish name and address:

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Name and phone numbers of those in your ONE group

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Contact person for group

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