

Option E. Ecumenical and Interreligious Issues

		CONFORMITY YES/NO/PARTIAL	REQUIRED CHANGES Recommendations and Suggestions
1.	I. Revelation and the Catholic Church A. Tracing Divine Revelation through the history of salvation. 1. Divine Revelation in the Old Testament times. a. The Triune God is revealed in the work of Creation, which originates with the Father and is brought into being through the Word (Jesus Christ) by the power of the Holy Spirit (CCC, nos. 282, 314).		
2.	b. God reveals himself to Abraham: the beginning of a people of faith (CCC, nos. 72, 992, 2571). c. In and through Abraham’s descendents, he forms the People of Israel: 1) Abraham’s grandson, Jacob, has twelve sons whose descendants shape the twelve tribes of the People of Israel. 2) “Israel” was the name given Jacob by God.		
3.	d. God reveals himself to Moses and forms the People of Israel (CCC, nos. 62-64). 1) He tells Moses about himself: “I am who am” (Ex 3:14). 2) He gives the Israelites a code of both worship and morality.		
4.	2. Divine Revelation in the New Testament (CCC, nos. 65-67, 124-127, 151, 422-455). a. In Jesus, the Eternal Word made man, is found the fullness of Revelation.		
5.	b. Jesus is revealed as the Son of God and the Christ or “Anointed One” of God, the Messiah foretold by God through the prophets of Israel. 1) The Annunciation to Mary (CCC, no. 494).		
6.	2) Jesus’ Baptism by St. John the Baptist (CCC, nos. 535-537).		
7.	3) St. Peter’s confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi (CCC, no. 552).		
8.	4) Jesus’ own proclamation of his divine Sonship (CCC, no. 590).		
9.	c. Jesus reveals the Trinity, the central mystery of faith (CCC, nos. 648-650). 1) Identifies himself as God’s Son and addresses God as Father. 2) Promises to send the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit. 3) Sends the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles at Pentecost.		
10.	d. Divine Revelation ends with the death of the last Apostle (CCC, nos. 66-67).		

11.	B. Divine foundation of the Catholic Church (CCC, nos. 758-769). 1. Planned by God the Father from the beginning of time (CCC, no. 759).		
12.	2. Pre-figured in the People of Israel (CCC, nos. 761-762).		
13.	3. Divinely instituted by Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Second Person of the Trinity (CCC, nos. 763-766).		
14.	4. Revealed by the Holy Spirit (CCC, nos. 767-768).		
15.	5. Guided, sustained, and sanctified by the Father through the Son and Holy Spirit (CCC, nos. 767-768).		
16.	6. The Church is the Body of Christ; he is our Head, we are the members of the Body (CCC, nos. 790-795).		
17.	C. The Catholic Church and Divine Revelation. 1. Jesus Christ instituted the Church on the foundation of the Apostles (CCC, nos. 857-860). 2. The Apostles were entrusted with faithfully proclaiming the Gospel and spreading the Good News Jesus Christ had entrusted to them (CCC, no. 858).		
18.	3. This role of ensuring an authentic proclamation of God's Revelation has been handed down in an unbroken line to the Apostles' successors—the pope and bishops (CCC, nos. 861-862).		
19.	4. The Catholic Church, in and through the pope and the bishops, is entrusted with protecting the whole Deposit of Faith, that is, the Revelation preserved in Scripture and in Tradition (CCC, nos. 84, 863-865, 1202).		
20.	II. Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities Apart from the Catholic Church A. An ecclesiology of communion (CCC, nos. 787-789). 1. Baptized people are in full communion with the Catholic Church when they are joined with Christ in the visible structure of the Church through the profession of faith, the reception of the sacraments, and respect and obedience toward those in authority in the Church (CIC, c. 205).		
21.	2. Members of other Christian churches and ecclesial communities are in imperfect communion with the Catholic Church (CCC, nos. 836-838). a. The communion is imperfect because of differences in doctrine, discipline, and/or ecclesiastical structure.		
22.	b. Christian churches (Orthodox Churches) are those with a validly ordained priesthood and the Eucharist (CCC, nos. 838).		

23.	c. Christian ecclesial communities do not have a validly ordained priesthood or the Eucharist.		
24.	3. The ecumenical movement works to overcome obstacles to full communion.		
25.	4. All the baptized, including those in imperfect communion with the Catholic Church, are members of Christ's Body, have the right to be called Christian, and are brothers and sisters to members of the Catholic Church (UR, no. 3).		
26.	B. From the very beginning of the Church, there have been rifts and serious dissension (CCC, no. 817). Serious dissensions resulted in breaks from full communion with the Church.		
27.	1. Schism with some Eastern Churches. a. Following the Council of Ephesus in 431. 1) Because of a dispute over the title of Mary as Mother of God, some Churches, such as the Assyrian Church, broke away from full communion. 2) Later some returned to union with Rome. 3) Modern dialogue with those who did not return has made progress in healing this schism.		
28.	b. Following the Council of Chalcedon in 451. 1) Those who believed the Monophysite heresy (that Jesus did not have both a divine nature and a human nature) also broke away from full communion with the Church and formed what are called the Oriental Orthodox Churches. 2) Modern dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox Catholics has made progress in healing this schism.		
29.	2. The Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church were one until 1054. a. The Schism of 1054 resulted in the establishment of the Eastern Orthodox Churches.		
30.	b. Contributing causes to the Schism of 1054. 1) <i>Filioque</i> controversy (CCC, nos. 247-248). 2) Growing cultural and political differences between East and West. 3) Different forms of Church governance emerged. a) Eastern Churches were governed by synods with a patriarch. b) Latin Church was monarchical with the pope as final authority.		
31.	c. Difference between Orthodox Churches and Eastern Catholic Churches.		

	1) They share the same liturgy but not the same bonds of episcopal communion.		
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32.	<p>d. Orthodox Churches and Catholic Church have strong ties to each other.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Same core doctrine, beliefs, and moral teachings. 2) Both have Apostolic Succession. 3) Seven sacraments, validity of ordinations. 		
33.	<p>e. Differences between the Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox Churches.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Most significant: Orthodox Churches do not recognize the infallibility or the primacy of jurisdiction of the Pope. 2) A few doctrinal formulations in the liturgy: the Eastern Orthodox Churches use the original wording of the Nicene Creed and do not accept the addition of the <i>filioque</i> (the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son). 3) Differences in sacramental law and practice (e.g., Orthodox tolerate divorce and remarriage). 4) Some Marian dogmas are taught in a different way. 5) Ecumenical councils: not all accepted by the Orthodox Churches. 		
34.	<p>3. Ecclesial communions: Anglican (Episcopalian), Lutheran, Reformed Christian.</p> <p>a. Who founded these various ecclesial communities and why?</p>		
35.	<p>b. Common ties between the Catholic Church and these ecclesial communions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Common beliefs about Christ derived from Scripture. 2) Baptisms celebrated with the Trinitarian formula and proper intention are considered valid by the Catholic Church. 3) In many cases, common moral convictions. 4) Some common liturgical practices, e.g., common cycle of Scripture readings. 		
36.	<p>c. Differences.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Differences in acceptance of the authority of the pope. 2) Differences in doctrine, e.g., Calvinist belief in predestination. 3) Differences in sacramental economy and practice, particularly the lack of the Sacrament of Holy Orders and, consequently, of a valid Eucharist. 4) Differences on moral questions: e.g., abortion, divorce, and remarriage. 		

37.	<p>4. Other Christian communities.</p> <p>a. Some are the result of further divisions among ecclesial communions which separated from the Catholic Church, e.g., Methodists separated from the Anglican Church.</p>		
38.	<p>b. Shared belief in Christ and the Triune God but a strong emphasis on <i>sola Scriptura</i> (Scripture alone) as the standard for determining belief.</p>		
39.	<p>c. Differences in doctrine, sacramental understanding and practice, morality.</p> <p>d. Many of these bodies (e.g., Baptists, Congregationalists) view the church as a local congregation and not a worldwide communion.</p>		
40.	<p>C. Ecumenical efforts.</p> <p>1. Ecumenism involves efforts aimed at fostering unity between the Catholic Church and other churches and Christian ecclesial communities.</p>		
41.	<p>2. Ecumenical activity requires the following (CCC, no. 821):</p> <p>a. Renewal of the Catholic Church in fidelity to her vocation.</p> <p>b. Conversion of heart by all the faithful.</p> <p>c. Prayer in common where appropriate.</p> <p>d. Fraternal knowledge of each other.</p> <p>e. Ecumenical formation of clergy and laity (knowledge of sacred theology including a historical perspective; understanding of the problems and benefits of the ecumenical movement).</p> <p>f. Dialogue among theologians of different churches and communities.</p> <p>g. Collaboration in activities of service to others.</p>		
42.	<p>3. Greater hope of restoring full communion where there is</p> <p>a. A visible continuity with the ancient Church (Apostolic Succession).</p> <p>b. A shared understanding of interpreting revealed truth (Scripture read through the lens of Tradition), e.g., such a starting point exists with the Orthodox Churches.</p> <p>c. Practice of the sacraments.</p>		
43.	<p>4. Greater obstacles continue to arise in doctrine and in praxis: e.g., ecclesial communions allowing women and non-celibate homosexuals to serve as ordained ministers.</p>		

44.	<p>III. The Relationship of the Catholic Church to the Jewish People</p> <p>A. The link between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people is special.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pope John Paul II referred to the Jewish people as “our elder brothers.” 2. The Jewish people were God’s special choice to be the instrument for the salvation of the world. They were the first to hear the Word of God, that is, Divine Revelation (CCC, no. 839). 		
45.	<p>B. The relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people holds a unique and special position.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unlike other non-Christian religions, the Jewish faith is a response to God’s Revelation in the Old Covenant (CCC, no. 839). 		
46.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The patriarchs of the Jewish people—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses—are also the ancestors in faith for members of the Catholic Church. 3. The Jewish people are the original Chosen People of God; Christians are the new People of God (CCC, no. 840). 		
47.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, was born and raised as a Jew. Mary, the Apostles, and the disciples were also Jews. 		
48.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The New Covenant with Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the promises of the first Covenant between God and the Jewish people. 		
49.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Catholics and Jews share common elements of moral life and practice: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Decalogue is a strong part of Catholic moral teaching and tradition. b. Jesus Christ drew on the Decalogue and the teaching of the prophets in his teaching on self-giving love and moral living. 		
50.	<p>C. Fundamental differences with the Catholic Church.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Jewish people do not acknowledge Jesus as a Divine Person, the Son of God, or the promised Messiah, nor do they accept the revealed truth of the Triune God, which is what is unique to Christian Revelation. 2. The Jewish people have no sacramental economy; they continue to rely on the ritual prescriptions of the first Covenant reinterpreted for post-Temple Judaism. 		
51.	<p>D. Anti-Judaism or anti-Semitism was evident among Catholics for many centuries.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Catholic Church condemns all unjust discrimination, including anti-Semitism. 2. In the twentieth century, the Catholic Church dropped from its liturgy any inference that the Jewish people as a whole were responsible for the Death of Christ because the truth is that the sins of all humanity were the cause of his Death. 		

52.	<p>E. Dialogue with the Jewish people.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This dialogue has a unique character in that we share roots of faith. 2. This dialogue also has an interfaith character because of the differences in faith and in sacramental understanding and practice. 3. Aims of this dialogue include <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Grow in mutual respect for one another as sons and daughters of God. b. Give common witness on matters of peace and justice. c. Deepen mutual understanding of the one God and his plan for the world. d. Bring all to Jesus Christ and to his Church (Rom 11:12, 15, 25; CCC, nos. 674, 1043). 		
53.	<p>IV. The Church and Other Non-Christians</p> <p>A. The Muslim people.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monotheistic (but non-Trinitarian) faith in common with Jews and Christians. 2. The Catholic Church and Muslims acknowledge God as the Creator and claim ties to the faith of Abraham. 		
54.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The Muslim people do not acknowledge God as the Father of Jesus, or Jesus Christ as the Divine Son of God, nor do they accept the Triune God, but they do revere Jesus as a prophet and Mary as the Virgin Mother of Jesus. 		
55.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. There are many common elements of moral life and practice between Catholics and Muslims. 		
56.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Islam has no sacramental economy; Islamic law requires testimony of faith, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage as expressions of faith. 		
57.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Unlike the Catholic Church, Islam has no central figure of authority on matters of faith and morals; there are also different ways to interpret the Qur'an. 		
58.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. The Crusades and their lasting impact. 		
59.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. The Catholic Church seeks to engage the Muslim community in dialogue to advance human solidarity. 		
60.	<p>B. There are non-Christian religions common in the United States, including major world religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, and others such as Sikhs, Mormons, and Bahai.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Common elements with Christianity. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. As human beings we share a common origin and end. b. Many of these religions teach to some degree compassionate action, moral restraint, spiritual discipline, and respect for human dignity. c. These religions contain elements of truth and virtue, which can help orient their members toward reception of the Gospel. 		

61.	2. Those who do not know Christ but who still strive to know and live in truth and holiness can be saved.		
62.	3. The fulfillment of the values and virtues of other religions is found in what the Catholic Church proclaims: a. God is one, and that God is Triune. b. Jesus Christ as the Son of God. c. Salvation is a gift of grace available through faith in Jesus Christ. d. Sanctification is for human beings to participate in the love of God now and eternally.		
63.	V. Proclamation and Dialogue A. The Catholic Church possesses the fullness of the means of salvation willed by God as the ordinary way of saving all people. 1. “All salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body” (CCC, no. 846). a. God is one and that God is Triune. b. Jesus Christ as the Son of God. c. Salvation is a gift of grace available through faith in Jesus Christ. d. Sanctification is for human beings to participate in the love of God now and eternally.		
64.	2. “Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation” (CCC, no. 847; LG, no. 16).		
65.	3. “Although in ways known to himself God can lead those who, through no fault of their own, are ignorant of the Gospel, to that faith without which it is impossible to please him, the Church still has the obligation and also the sacred right to evangelize all men” (CCC, no. 848; LG, no. 16).		
66.	B. Interreligious dialogue. 1. There are many forms of interreligious dialogue. a. The dialogue of daily life in religiously pluralistic societies/communities. b. The dialogue of shared service to the needy. c. The dialogue of theologians and scholars. d. The dialogue of shared spiritual experience.		
67.	2. Such dialogue requires mutual search for truth among those learned in their own religious traditions. 3. Requires respect and understanding of differences in culture as well as in belief. 4. Requires training in accurate knowledge of other religions. 5. Can and should involve working together in service to those in need.		

68.	VI. Challenges A. Isn't one faith or religion just as good as any other? 1. No, that statement is not true. The fullness of Revelation and truth subsists in the Catholic Church. 2. If one has been given the gift of faith and chooses to reject or neglect that gift, that person acts in a way that is gravely wrong. 3. The Church engages in many types of dialogue, both ecumenical and interfaith. Those dialogues are characterized by respect and aim to bring about more unity.		
69.	B. Isn't it more important to show tolerance and not say that the Catholic faith is better than any other? 1. Judgment about the truth of the Catholic faith does not mean that Catholics should not show respect toward people of other faiths and religions. 2. Respect involves the effort of mutual respect and charity, and a refusal to treat one as less worthy because of differences. 3. Catholics are to be respectful of people in their intrinsic dignity but not tolerant of falsehood.		
70.	C. If unity of people in faith is the real goal, why can't each side compromise? 1. While unity of Christians is an important goal, the Catholic Church cannot compromise on the truth of what God has revealed. Truth is one; we need to subject ourselves to the whole truth. 2. Where there are intrinsic contradictions in belief, one belief is true and one must be false. 3. Sometimes, however, we overemphasize some aspects of the truth at the expense of other aspects. Serious, respectful, and loving pursuit of the whole truth can help us recapture the needed balance.		
71.	D. What caused the four divisions in Christianity from the time of Ephesus, Chalcedon, the Schism of 1054, and the Protestant Reformation? Is there any hope of unity? 1. There were various reasons for the divisions. a. In each case, there were disagreements about doctrine. b. In each case, some degree of politics also contributed to the fractures.		
72.	2. Since Vatican II, the Catholic Church has initiated and sponsored many meetings and dialogues with hope for movement toward unity. Positive outcomes include the following: a. A willingness to meet face to face for prayer and dialogue. b. Occasional joint statements on matters of doctrine and belief (e.g., joint statement with Anglicans on Mary, joint statement with Lutherans on justification).		