



INTRODUCTORY LETTER

by the President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops  
on the purpose of the pamphlet  
*Catholics and Muslims in Canada: Believers and Citizens in Society*  
issued by the Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity,  
Religious Relations with the Jews, and Interfaith Dialogue

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Our Conference's Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity, Religious Relations with the Jews, and Interfaith Dialogue has issued a resource entitled *Catholics and Muslims in Canada: Believers and Citizens in Society*. The pamphlet is meant to help Canadian Catholics better understand their Muslim neighbours. Our country is home to an impressive array of cultures and religions, and the Catholic Bishops of Canada wish to foster understanding and dialogue amongst the diverse people of our land.

Christianity and Islam are the two most populous religious groups in the world. For our own good and for the good of all humanity, we must learn to live in harmony with each other, and Canada can certainly play an important role in modeling this harmonious relationship. Knowledge of each other is essential for such a task. It is with this hope that the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops presents its new resource. It is limited in scope; it does not explore in depth our doctrinal differences, nor does it comment on the present state of geopolitics. However, it does constitute an important step that we can all take in responding to Saint Paul's invitation: "Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up building" (Romans 14.19).

The first part of the pamphlet presents the origins of Islam, its main currents today, its similarities and its differences from Christianity. The second part provides an overview of the history and present state of interreligious dialogue between Catholics and Muslims, both at the international and national level, concluding with some suggestions about how everyone can contribute to such dialogue.

As beautifully proclaimed by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, we are called by our Baptism to be builders of a just and peaceful society:

*"By preaching Jesus Christ, who is himself peace (cf. Eph 2:14), the new evangelization calls on every baptized person to be a peacemaker and a credible witness to a reconciled life. In a culture which privileges dialogue as a form of encounter, it is time to devise a means for building consensus and agreement while seeking the goal of a just, responsive and inclusive society" [n. 239].*

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