

What we share

Start with what is already true between us.

In short. The Catholic Church teaches that all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ, have a right to be called Christians, and are accepted as brothers and sisters in the Lord.¹ Baptism is the foundation of communion among all Christians.²

Key points

- Baptized Christians are rightly called Christians and accepted as brothers and sisters.¹
- Many elements of sanctification and truth, including the written Word of God, are found outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church.³
- Christ always gives his Church the gift of unity, and Jesus prayed that his disciples may all be one.⁴
- Honest dialogue never hides doctrine: false irenicism is foreign to ecumenism.⁵

Try this, this week

1. **Read John 17:20–23.** This is the prayer of Jesus for all who would believe in him.
2. **List what you already share.** Use the five points in this lesson as a start.
3. **Write down one honest question.** The next steps take them one at a time.
4. **Pray for a Catholic you know.** And, if you like, ask them to pray for you.

“One body and one Spirit: as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.”

Ephesians 4:4–6, Douay–Rheims

Watch out: what this does not mean

- Unity is not pretending: the Church teaches that doctrine should be clearly presented in its entirety.⁵
- The Church does not charge people born into other Christian communities with the sin of separation.¹

Common questions

Does the Catholic Church think Protestants are Christians?

Yes. The Church teaches that all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ and have a right to be called Christians.^{1,6}

Do Catholics believe we are saved by grace?

The Catechism teaches that our justification comes from the grace of God, his free and undeserved help.⁷ Because the initiative belongs to God, no one can merit the initial grace of forgiveness and justification.^{8,9}

Remember: Start with what is already true between us.

Sources

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| 1. CCC 818 | 6. Unitatis Redintegratio 3 |
| 2. CCC 1271 | 7. CCC 1996 |
| 3. CCC 819 | 8. CCC 2010 |
| 4. CCC 820 | 9. Ephesians 2:8–9 (Douay–Rheims) |
| 5. Unitatis Redintegratio 11 | |

Quotation above: Ephesians 4:4–6, Douay–Rheims. Catechism: official text on vatican.va.

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