



CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA ECUMENICAL AND INTER-RELIGIOUS MINISTRIES

LEADERSHIP

The Catholic Apostolic Church in North America's (CACINA's) Vicar for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs (hereafter referred to as Vicar) is the head of the Office of Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs in our communion. The Vicar also serves as the Ecumenical Officer.

Representatives in local dioceses participate in ecumenical dialogue and processes as needed and instructed by the Ecumenical Officer.

The Vicar represents CACINA's Presiding Bishop in promoting the engagement of CACINA in ecumenical and inter-religious activity. There will be no commitments or decisions on ecumenical or inter-religious affairs without the full approval of the CACINA College of Bishops.

The Diocesan Ecumenical Representatives support the planning and implementation of ecumenical and inter-religious activities by the Vicar for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs and Presiding Bishop. They also assist in Diocese wide initiatives as well as promoting regional, local, and parish-based activities.

The Office of Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs encourages parishes to be involved in local ecumenical and interfaith programs and outreach. Every parish should have a parishioner to serve as a "Parish Ecumenical Representative" (PER) to assist the pastor and the parish-at-large in carrying out ecumenical and interfaith initiatives.

ECUMENICAL ETIQUETTE: PREPARING ONESELF FOR DIALOGUE

Preparing oneself for ecumenical work involves prayer, understanding one's self, knowledge of CACINA's history, and CACINA's Values – Mission – Vision. CACINA is not an independent church; CACINA is a denomination of the Catholic Church.

PRAYER

Ecumenical and interfaith activities ought to begin with the recognition that what we seek to do in these activities is to cooperate with God's desire for "all to be one" (John 17:21). The context of dialogue and ecumenical activity must always be that of prayer and a humble placing of self at God's disposal, without compromising our authentic Catholic identity.

UNDERSTANDING SELF & ONE'S CHURCH

Ecumenical and interfaith activities always begin with a desire to understand one another's beliefs and traditions.

COMMUNICATION

In ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, the purpose is not to convince or persuade, but to learn authentically and present from the heart of Love.

- Dialogue is not done in a spirit of debate. In order to learn about our brothers and sisters, we must first listen to them. Good or active listening involves some key principles.
- It is important to demonstrate respect for the one or ones we are speaking to and give full attention to what is being said.
- Each dialogue 'partner' should be allowed to define his or her own tradition rather than have it defined by a 'partner' not of that tradition. In dialogue, we also must not compare our Values and Mission/Apostolic Succession with our partner's practice, but rather our ideals with our partner's ideals, our practice with our partner's practice.

In theological dialogue, it is best to begin by identifying the areas of commonality before turning to areas of difference. In this way, we start with what **unites** us.

- In discussion of differences, it can be very helpful to seek understanding of why these differences developed and the values or concerns that underlie them.
- Faith, jurisdiction, and independence can be sensitive issues to discuss. One may feel personally challenged by others' comments. It is best to assume that comments are never personally directed but are expressed in good faith.

PARISH/MISSIONS

The parishes and/or missions are the basic unit of the diocese. Here also the ecumenical spirit must find true and sincere expressions, so that the teachings, the flavor of the CACINA Church on ecumenism may find their way into the minds and hearts of the faithful. At this level, too, the expressions of ecumenism must be adapted to the each, local situation; they will know us by our love. It is important that the pastor/leader and their people take seriously the call of the CACINA Church to engage themselves both in the education for Christian unity and in the expression of it in ecumenical and inter-religious activities.

- In each parish and/or mission, there should be an individual or ecumenical committee that involves the parish, as a whole, in ecumenical and inter-religious events in cooperation with our Diocesan Bishop.

APPENDIX I - DEFINITIONS

Familiarity with and the correct use of terminology can be beneficial in ecumenical and interfaith activities and conversations.

Apostolic Succession:

Succession in an unbroken line from the apostles to the present day. This includes succession in the apostolic faith as well as succession in ordained ministry.

Church: (Latin: ecclesia):

The word "church" refers to the assembly of God's People called together by its founder, Jesus Christ. It has a wide variety of possible nuances and uses in discourse among Christians. It can refer to whole denominations, local congregations of those denominations, worship buildings, etc. Its use sometimes requires great care and careful interpretation, especially in official documents of the Catholic Church and in ecumenical dialogue.

CACINA (Catholic Apostolic Church in North America) Church – visit www.cacina.org for an outline of CACINA's history.

Denomination:

This term refers to Protestant churches or, in CACINA terms, ecclesial communities. Although there is no universally accepted definition of a denomination, three things are generally required: regular Sunday worship in designated places, recognizable criteria for membership, and at least five congregations belonging to the denomination, although not necessary. This is a way of distinguishing a genuine denomination from one that exists only on paper for whatever reason (tax exemption, for example) and from individual congregations that have no affiliations with a larger body of Christians.

Ecumenical:

Relationships and interactions among one, two, or more Christian churches. Strictly speaking, the ecumenical movement has as its purpose promoting unity among and between the Christian churches, or the restoration of unity in the Church founded by Jesus Christ. It is a movement of and for Christians. The final goal is the full, visible unity of the Church.

Ecumenical Officer:

Representative for ecumenical and inter-religious affairs appointed by the presiding bishop or college of bishops.

Vicar for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs:

The Presiding Bishop's personal representative at ecumenical or inter-religious events and leads negotiations and agreements for inter-communion agreements/partnerships.

ECUMENICAL LETTER OF COVENANT (SAMPLE)

SAMPLE Agreement with another jurisdiction

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Believing in the will of the Lord Jesus Christ "that all may be one," mutually confessing the three ecumenical creeds, encouraged by our common worship and service, and spurred on by the people of God of the Catholic Apostolic Church in North America (CACINA), _____ and _____, make this joint affirmation and solemn covenant.

Together we affirm that

Unity is a gift that Christ has promised to all who seek to live by the guidance of the Holy Spirit according to the will of the Father,
Jesus Christ, The Savior and Lord of the world, is the living center of our faith,
New life in Christ comes through the grace of God and is nourished by the Word of God in scripture, by the sacraments, and by the Holy Spirit,
Jesus' desire for the unity of his followers is a call to all Christians to work for unity in the Church.

We seek to make that unity more visible among us.

The diverse gifts and traditions of our Communion are blessings from God that will enrich a wider and fuller communion.

The positive results of our international, national, and regional theological dialogues move us toward our mutual goal of full communion.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to overcome all obstacles that still exist in doctrine, sacramental life, and ecclesial structures so that the full unity of God's Church may be realized.

Therefore, celebrating the faithful initiatives of past and present church leaders in fostering church unity, we call upon the People of God in our respective synod and dioceses to join in this covenant, and we commit ourselves to the following actions;

To further the unity of Christ's Church, we will;

- Pray regularly for one another's needs and for the unity of our Churches, especially at public liturgies.
- Sponsor prayer services, on, for example, The Feast of Pentecost, All Saints Day, at Thanksgiving, and especially when situations in this world present themselves.
- Encourage the parishes and congregations of our dioceses and synod to seek suitable occasions for common prayer, worship, dialogue, and education leading to covenant relationships.
- Work together for peace, justice, and the common good.
- Generate shared lectionary and scripture studies.
- Share formational and educational events and retreats, to include ZOOM on line prayer and share, Lectio Divina, Chaplains prayer time, weekly religious services and many more.

- Develop shared programs among institutions, chaplaincies, and St Charles Institute Seminary program and ministries.
- Collaborate in planning for effective ministry at the synodical, diocesan, and parochial levels through their ecumenical and liturgical commissions and committees.
- Continue our dialogue in the spirit of the international and national dialogues as a way of promoting mutual understanding.
- Strive toward the full realization of our unity by identifying and removing present obstacles while supporting and preserving our respective traditions.
- Place no impediment to the cause of unity.
- Review the goals and achievements of this covenant each year and renew the covenant at a joint service held annually.

We dedicate ourselves to these objectives, we promise to remain faithful to this covenant, and we pray for the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring us to an even deeper communion.

In witness whereof, we have set our hands this MONTH, Date, A.D. YEAR, in Where, USA.

Presiding Bishop, CACINA

Presiding Bishop, (Name of Jurisdiction)