

Purpose of Document

This document is designed as a concise statement of Catholic Christianity, with an evangelical emphasis, aimed at fostering evangelism, while avoiding proselytism. It is not a definitive theological statement on all aspects of Catholic belief, but a relatively simple definition of some fundamental beliefs, geared towards facilitating dialogue and cooperation in evangelism. The focus is on those areas that are central to the life of every Catholic Christian, seeking to remove some of the barriers to Christians working together, often arising from wrong perceptions of Catholic Church teaching.

Evangelical Catholics affirm RC Church teaching that there is one all-sufficient sacrifice for sins, accomplished once for all on Calvary. This is affirmed in the Anglican/RC Commission on the Eucharist (1981): “Christ’s death on the Cross... was the one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world. There can be no repetition of, or addition to, what was then accomplished once for all by Christ.”

Evangelical Catholics also hold that a commitment to caring for the poor, the sick and the disadvantaged is an integral element in a commitment to evangelism.

What does “evangelical” mean?

The word “evangelical” originates from the Greek word for gospel in the New Testament (euangelion), and describes those whose lives have been transformed by the message of the Gospel, and who seek to share the good news of Jesus.

Our Commitment to Evangelise

St John Paul II defines our task: “New evangelisation ... is not a matter of merely passing on a doctrine, but rather of a personal and profound meeting with the Saviour.... I sense the moment has come to commit all of the Church’s energies to a new evangelisation.” (Redemptoris Missio 1990.) This has found expression through Charismatic Renewal, Cursillo, Focolare, the Alpha Course, Life in the Spirit Seminars, ChristLife etc.

Our commitment to the Jewish People

Because of their love of Scripture, evangelical Catholics are discovering a new love for the Jewish people. A growing number support Towards Jerusalem Council II (www.tjcii.eu), a movement committed to healing the original schism in the church between Jewish & Gentile believers. (Many Jewish believers today call themselves Messianic Jews.) Pope John Paul II affirmed the need to acknowledge “the common roots linking Christianity and the Jewish people, who are called by God to a covenant which remains irrevocable (Rom 11:29), and has attained definitive fullness in Christ... Dialogue with Judaism...is fundamentally important for the self-knowledge of Christians and for the transcending of divisions between the Churches...” (Ecclesia in Europa)

Welcome for Document

“I welcome this initiative which reminds us that Christian faith is essentially a lived relationship with Jesus Christ.”

Kevin Doran, Catholic Bishop of Elphin.

“I welcome this initiative to encourage us all to focus on evangelising, being and bringing Christ’s good news to our fellow pilgrims and to those whom we meet on the journeying,”

Donal McKeown, Catholic Bishop of Derry.

“Evangelical Christians in Ireland have a deep desire to make Jesus Christ known in our land, and I welcome the Evangelical Catholic Initiative to join in this task.”

Ferran Glenfield, COI Bishop of Kilmore Elphin & Ardagh.

“The clear emphasis on the Lord Jesus Christ, who He is and what He has done for us on the cross, is a source of great strength and encouragement as we reach out in His name to a broken world.”

Rev. Frank Sellar, Moderator Presbyterian Church.

“I welcome the relaunch of the Evangelical Catholic Initiative. Every blessing to all who work towards revival of faith in Christ and His church.”

Rev. Bill Mullally, President, Methodist Church in Ireland.

“I welcome this ECI initiative. Any endeavour that is Christ centred, scripturally sound, cross focused and Spirit led is something I encourage and embrace.”

Rev. Sean Mullarkey, Assemblies of God Ireland (AGI) National Leader

Other Evangelical Catholic Initiative publications:

Why You Need To Read The Bible

How you can get to know Jesus; What is the Kerygma?

Extracts from St Patricks Confession

Extracts from Rebuilt by Fr. Mike White & Tom Corcoran

Extracts from Divine Renovation by Fr. James Mallon

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**EVANGELICAL
CATHOLIC INITIATIVE**

What is an Evangelical Catholic?



Evangelical Catholics

Millions of Roman Catholics throughout the world have come into a personal relationship with Jesus, many through the various renewal movements in the Catholic Church. They are truly evangelical in that they have received the gospel, accepted Jesus as personal Lord and Saviour and manifest the fruit of the Holy Spirit as missionary disciples.

These evangelical Catholics have a growing love and respect for Scripture as the Word of God. They are born again Christians. They would identify themselves variously as committed Christians, Charismatic Catholics, renewed Catholics, born again Catholics, or simply Catholics who love the Lord. They would regard themselves as brothers or sisters in Christ of all evangelical Christians in the various Protestant Churches.

Evangelical Catholics affirm:

- Salvation cannot be earned, it is a free gift. However, the evidence of good deeds indicating that one has become a committed Christian must then follow.
- There is only one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).
- The priesthood of all believers, which means that a Christian has direct access to the Father through Jesus.
- Scripture in its entirety (both Old and New Testaments) is the inspired, authoritative Word of God.
- The Eucharist (Mass) is not a repetition of Calvary. Jesus died once and for all. The priest and people enter into that one all-sufficient sacrifice by grace.
- All human beings are born into a state of separation from God as a result of the Fall.
- Heaven for those who accept the salvation won by Jesus and hell for those who die unrepentant for their wickedness.
- Jesus died on the cross in atonement for all sin, and in his death took the place of all sinners in bearing their guilt (Is. 53:6).
- Jesus will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.

NB: These affirmations are official teaching of the Catholic Church, found in the Decree on the Laity (Ch.2), Dogmatic Const. on the Church (Chs. 2&7), Dogmatic Const. on Divine Revelation (Chs. 1, 3, 4) and Const. on Sacred Liturgy (Ch.1).

Evangelical Catholics believe that:

- The Catholic Church is a Christian Church that has taken on some un-Christian practices over the centuries. However, a major renewal of the Holy Spirit has been and is taking place directly as a result of the Second Vatican Council addressing these issues.
- The Holy Spirit is moving to bring both Renewal and Revival in the Roman Catholic Church, as in other Christian Churches.
- Many members of the Catholic Church, while being perhaps over-sacramentalised, have been under-evangelised, and therefore its members need to be called as adults to accept Jesus as personal Lord and Saviour. In the words of Pope Paul VI : “The Church exists in order to evangelise.”
- There are many God-honouring traditions in the Catholic Church.

Evangelical Catholics are committed to:

- Jesus as the only way to salvation - one day every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.
- The necessity of the empowering of the Holy Spirit for all Christians, to enable them to follow their “holy calling” and “do the works of Christ”.
- A respect for and obedience to the teaching authority of the Pope and Bishops of the Catholic Church, unless that obedience would conflict with one’s conscience as enlightened by Scripture and Church teaching.
- The priority of the New Evangelisation* within the life of the local Catholic Church and a willingness to join with fellow Christians in other denominations to fulfil the biblical command to take Christ to all the nations.

(*Defined by the Evangelisation 2000 Office, Rome as: “To proclaim with the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) the incarnate, crucified, resurrected and living Jesus Christ (Acts 2:32) as the only Saviour (Acts 4:12) and Divine Lord (Phil. 2:9-11) of all mankind (1Tim.2:4; 4:10)...”)

- An acknowledgement that we are all sinners saved by grace, called to “a journey of conversion ... [asking] pardon for the divisions ... among Christians, for the violence some have used in the service of the truth ... [confessing] our responsibilities ... for the evils of today.” (St. John Paul II, 12 March 2000)

The Roman Catholic Church affirms the historic doctrine of the Nicene Creed. Catholics affirm this creed every time they take part in the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist.

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“There can be no **true evangelisation** without the explicit **proclamation of Jesus as Lord** ... Evangelisation demands familiarity with God’s Word, which calls for dioceses, parishes and Catholic associations to provide a serious, ongoing study of the Bible” **Pope Francis: Evangelii Gaudium** (Par 110, 138)