

What is dialogue?

I. Definition - Dialogue implies speaking and listening, giving and receiving, mutual growth and enrichment. It is based on witness to one's faith as well as openness to the religion of another. It is not a betrayal of the mission of the Church, nor is it a new method of conversion to Christianity.

II. distinctions

A. Difference b/w proselytization and evangelization

1. **proselytization** is trying to convert someone using fear, threats, manipulation, bribery or unwanted and intrusive attempts to share the faith.

a) Cardinal Levada explains: "The term proselytism originated in the context of Judaism, in which the term *proselyte* referred to someone who, coming from the gentiles, had passed into the Chosen People. So too, in the Christian context, the term proselytism was often used as a synonym for missionary activity. More recently, however, the term has taken on a negative connotation, to mean the promotion of a religion by using means, and for motives, contrary to the spirit of the Gospel; that is, which do not safeguard the freedom and dignity of the human person." (Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization)

2. **evangelization** is sharing one's faith a "proclamation of Christ and his Gospel by word and the testimony of life." (CCC 905)

B. Difference b/w syncretism, relativism, and dialogue

1. **syncretism** is the merging or synthesizing different religions into one losing the essence of both

2. **relativism** is the belief that all religions are all the same at their core and the differences do not matter

3. **dialogue** is a sharing with the other so as to better understand the similarities and differences, to dispel misconceptions and misunderstandings, and to receive mutual growth and enrichment

C. ecumenical vs. interreligious

1. **ecumenical** dialogue is dialogue with non-Catholic Christians

2. **interreligious** dialogue is dialogue with non-Christians (sometimes also called **interfaith** dialogue)

D. interreligious vs. intrareligious

1. **interreligious** dialogue takes place between different religions
2. **intrareligious** dialogue take place within one religion (i.e. Catholics discussing Catholicism with other Catholics)

III. types of dialogue

- A. dialogue of life - where people strive to live in an open and neighbourly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations.
- B. dialogue of action - in which Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people.
- C. dialogue of theological exchange - where specialists seek to deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages, and to appreciate each other's spiritual values.
- D. dialogue of religious experience - where persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith and ways of searching for God or the Absolute.