

Fr. Perozich comments —

The article below is informative. It is neither the last word on Islam nor the way that Islam is practiced differently among its adherents.

The article deals with how the church views the general plan for salvation which includes all people for faith in Jesus Christ.

Practicing Catholics have the relationship in word, sacrament, charity.

Non Catholic Christians have the word and charity.

Jews have the word and the covenant in preparation for faith in Jesus.

Moslems have a knowledge of one God as creator as preparation for faith in Jesus.

Still, the texts that guide Moslems deny the Trinity, the divine sonship of Jesus. They call for the end of faiths that oppose their own. The violence in Israel and Nigeria are most recent examples by some adherents of Islam.

Prayers and clear teaching about Jesus are part of the divine commission of Jesus to us Christians in order to prepare everyone to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

How should Catholics think about Islam?

Is the Triune God the Allah discussed in the Qur'an? And is Islam just another path to salvation like Catholic Christianity?

[October 5, 2025](#) [David Paul Deavel](#) [The Dispatch](#)



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What does the Catholic Church believe about Islam and about Muslims? This question flares up periodically on the internet and sometimes in real life. Clearly, Muslims reject Jesus and are not a part of the Church. On the other hand, what (some will ask) about certain statements made in the Second Vatican Council's dogmatic constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*? There, they read (or are told), Muslims worship the one God with Catholics and are even included in the "plan of salvation."

Is the Triune God the Allah discussed in the Qur'an? And is Islam just another path to salvation like Catholic Christianity?

Let's take these topics in order. But first, a word about the passages to which people object and their context. *Lumen Gentium* (LG) is about how Christ calls all to union with Him through His Church. Chapter 1 treats the Church not merely as a visible institution, but as the very "kingdom of Christ now present in mystery," a kingdom that "grows visibly through the power of

God in the world” (LG 3). The Body of Christ travels through the world until the end of time, mysteriously communicating salvation to the whole world so that all might come to know Christ.

Chapter 2 approaches the Church from a slightly different viewpoint—but to the same end. The Church is now seen as the people of God, a new and expanded Israel that is no longer limited according to genealogy. Now, it is a body of Jews and Gentiles together seeking to bring all people into this new communion with Jesus and each other. After discussing this marvelous people, composed of the ministerial priesthood and the laity, all of whom are nourished by Christ in the sacraments and brought to perfection by their practice of the virtues under the Holy Spirit’s power, LG 14-17 closes the chapter by discussing the Church’s membership and how “the Catholic faithful, all who believe in Christ, and indeed the whole of mankind” either “belong to or are related in various ways” to the people of God, “for all men are called by the grace of God to salvation” (13).

This section suggests an image of concentric circles. At the very center is Christ, and closest to Him are those fully and visibly united with His Body the Church (LG 14). Interestingly, despite worries about Vatican II’s “laxity,” this is the first Ecumenical Council to discuss the interior and further requirements of communion with Christ and the Church. A few lines demonstrate this:

He is not saved, however, who, though part of the body of the Church, does not persevere in charity. ... All the Church’s children should remember that their exalted status is to be attributed not to their own merits but to the special grace of Christ. If they fail moreover to respond to that grace in thought, word and deed, not only shall they not be saved but they will be the more severely judged.

After this somewhat unsettling treatment of those in “full communion,” LG 14 closes by declaring that the Church “already

embraces” catechumens “as her own.” For those wondering about this disparity in tone, it might be remembered that our Lord declared that those to whom much has been given will also have much demanded of them (Luke 12:48).

Nevertheless, LG 14 lays down the law that anyone who, “knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by Christ, would refuse to enter or remain in it, could not be saved.” This shapes how we understand the circles further out from the Church.

LG 15 discusses other Christians who are “in many ways linked” with the people of God through their baptism, their reception of the Holy Spirit’s “gifts and graces,” and their witness to Christ’s saving power—some even by the great sacrifice of martyrdom. These other Christians are truly Christians, even if they “do not profess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve the unity of communion with the successor of Peter.” As we know from LG 14, if these Christians become aware of the fullness of truth and communion in the Church, they are required to join her or else perish.

LG 16 is where we find Muslims. After describing the Jews and God’s continuing love of this people from whom Christ was taken, LG says that “the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator.” In other words, those who believe in the one God have it right. And that includes “the Muslims, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind.” These are the lines that cause people to worry. How could the Council say that they adore “with us . . . the one and merciful God” and “hold the faith of Abraham”?

It’s important to note a few things here. First of all, **LG says they “profess to” hold Abraham’s faith. It does not endorse Islamic thought as fully consonant with Christianity or even Judaism.**

But second, this passage appears in a section about those who “acknowledge the Creator.” Muslims certainly hold that there is one God who created heaven and earth. Insofar as there is one God, and they hold and worship that one God, it can only be the same God that Catholics worship. *[Not necessarily. Creation can be attributed to another god — rp]*

While some people think this statement is a Vatican II innovation, the approach to Muslims is fairly standard. St. John of Damascus and other theologians from the beginning treated **Islam as a Christian heresy that sawed off the divinely revealed truths of the Incarnation and the Trinity from the doctrine of God.** Indeed, that position is what one would find in standard sources from before the Council.

The old 1913 Catholic Encyclopedia, for instance, says, “The doctrines of Islam concerning God — His unity and Divine attributes — are essentially those of the Bible.” This doesn’t mean that the Islamic understanding of God is perfect, but there is much truth to it on the philosophical level. As with Jews, who also deny the Incarnation and the Trinity, we can acknowledge that they do indeed worship God even if imperfectly.

Some might still object: “I’ve read the Qur’an! There is so much that is wrong about this character. How can this be the same God?”

Consider an analogy. You and I both know who Bob is because we see him at work and in the neighborhood. You know that Bob is a gentle father of many grown children who is full of kindness but has said some tough things to people at his job who are not doing their work.

*Through a series of inferences from these “tough” moments, along with some bad information from others, I might think Bob is a cold figure who has no children and doesn’t really like people. We would both know some basic truths, but you would know the deeper truth about Bob’s character. That is how it is with **Muslims. They know who the one God is, but they have many mistaken impressions of his nature and character.***

So, are Muslims part of the “plan of salvation”? As should be clear by now, **all are part of the plan of salvation. God desires that all men come to know Him and enter into communion with Him through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.** He wants us to become fully part of the people of God by entering into the Church. And **all the truths that Muslims hold are a preparation for the fullest truth of Christ.** *[N.B. that all that Muslims hold may not be truth, but some may be. — rp]*

As to whether Muslims (or anybody not visibly in the Church) can be saved, God alone is the judge. But LG 16 gives us the criteria by which God judges:

Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known by the dictates of conscience.

While many people boil this down to having “invincible ignorance” or “following your conscience,” it’s important to see what the passage really says. **For people to have invincible ignorance means they don’t know Christ or His Church “through no fault of their own.”** Only God knows whether someone truly doesn’t know or is hiding from God. Only God knows whether people have followed their consciences or have just ignored them and whether they have responded to the grace God provides for them to find the Way, Truth, and Life.

How should Catholics think of Muslims? As part of God’s plan of salvation, called like all of us to be holy in Christ. They are aware of God and seek to worship Him but cannot do so fully because they do not know His Son. Let us pray for them and for opportunities to introduce Him to them.

(This article appeared originally in The Catholic Servant in slightly different form.)

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