

Catholicism

Who?

Jesus broke through the polarization of his time

! Jesus announces the Kingdom of God: a kingdom of love, not of power.

! The story of 'The Syrophenician Woman's Faith' (Mark 7:24-30): Jesus learns not to polarize.

! The Beatitudes are a promise and a way of life (Mt 5:1-12).

! Jesus breaks down barriers. He touches the sick, visits tax collectors and sinners, and so on.

! Jesus forgives, right up to the cross.



How?

Openness

'Catholic' = 'universal': the Catholic message and Church are addressed to everyone.

In God's Kingdom, Catholics, like Jesus, dare to expand their boundaries, listen to the needs of others and break through polarization.



Sensitivity to symbols

Against radicalization and polarization.
Teaches Catholics to read the Bible in a symbolic way.

Encourages Catholics to take care of nature, animals, and every fellow human being.



Justice

The just war theory: six conditions for justifying armed conflict in order to avoid war and violence as much as possible.

Since **Vatican II** (1962-1965), there have been increasing voices within the Church calling for a transition to a **'just peace'**: a world without violence and oppression.



"Terrorism does not come from religion. It uses religion as an excuse. Religion can never condone murder, terror or oppression."

- Pope Francis, 2021



"Peace is an order that is founded on truth, built up on justice, nurtured and animated by charity, and brought into effect under the auspices of freedom."

- *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII, 1963

Challenges within Catholicism

Secularization

The disappearance of (the role of) religion from society. The evident presence of Catholicism in the daily life of individuals and groups is becoming less observable and lived.

Pluralization

The Catholic tradition is no longer self-evident in the lives, thoughts, and actions of groups and individuals. The Church must find its place and role in a plural world.

The role of woman in the Church

Women can take on tasks within the Church, but they may not take place in ordained offices. This is increasingly being discussed.

The perspective on homosexuality

Homosexual relationships and acts are not accepted by the Church. This is increasingly being discussed.

Catholic Church sexual abuse cases

Since the end of the 20th century, the Church has faced numerous allegations of sexual abuse within the Church. The Church is often blamed for not doing enough to support and protect the victims. This undermines the moral authority of the Catholic Church.



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