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## CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM FAITH IN THE SAME GOD AFTER THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

**Abstract.** This article engages in a discussion about whether Christians and Muslims believe in the same God. It first presents the opinions of the authors who take a negative view, then the opinions of those who take a positive view. It also gives one Muslim viewpoint on the subject. In the next part, based on the letter of Pope Gregory VII, the Second Vatican Council, the address of Paul VI, the address of John Paul II, the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, the address by Pope Francis at an interreligious meeting in Ur, and concluded by the *Prayer of the Children of Abraham*, it claims that Christians and Muslims believe in the same God. The author does not address the issue of every religion believing in the same God differently. In objecting to the view of the common belief of both monotheistic religions in the same God with the fact that Muslims do not recognize the Most Holy Trinity, the author points out that even Jews do not believe in it and no one disputes that Jews and Christians believe in the same God.

**Keywords:** Christians; Muslims; God; Second Vatican Council; popes.

### INTRODUCTION

German philosopher R. Schaeffler gave a lecture in Freiburg in 2005: “Do faith, philosophy and theology speak of the same God?” Schaeffler analyses the old issue of the relationship between philosophical and religious thinking, the ‘tension’ between the God of philosophers and theologians highlighted by Pascal. Does philosophy speak of God in a different way than faith or does it speak of another ‘subject’?

C. V. Pospíšil formulated the difficulties when Christian-oriented authors realize that it is true that it is not easy to connect the God who acts in history with the image of a supreme being to which human reason rushes based on

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the principles of logic and metaphysics. Christians have difficulty identifying the “God of old philosophers” with the “God of revelation.”<sup>1</sup>

The given problem evokes the question asked many times today: Is the God of Christians and Muslims identical?<sup>2</sup> We must ask whether the triune God is the same as YHWH or Allah as he manifests himself in very different ways in the holy texts of individual religions.<sup>3</sup> What is interesting is that many claim that Christians and Muslims do not believe in the same God, but practically no one objects to the triune God being the same God as Yahweh in the Old Testament, who is also not identically worshipped by Jews and Christians. God’s trinity is one of the most serious reasons against the view that Christians and Muslims believe in the same God. However, this objection does not appear in reference to God in whom the followers of Judaism believe.

The type of pluralism that emphasizes the identity of the God of Abrahamic religions is represented from Christian positions in, for example, the book by M. Volf.<sup>4</sup> However, critical responses must also be taken into account.<sup>5</sup>

This is a current topic. New statements of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, which directly or indirectly take a position on it, are still emerging. That is why we have decided to examine it in light of the latest developments and to offer a current answer to the issue.

## 1. CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIANS

### 1.1. REFUSING TO BELIEVE IN THE SAME GOD

Monotheism is the heart of Islam and the Quran. Surah 112 states: “He is God, the One and Only. God, the Eternal, Absolute. [...] nor is He begotten.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Martin Vašek, “Náboženský a transcendentálno-filozofický pojem Boha v myslení Richarda Schaefflera,” *Studia theologica* 20(2018), no. 1: 203–204.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ibidem, 204, note no. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Jáchym Šenkyřík, “Současná muslimská teologie náboženství. Adekvátnost typologie exkluzivismus–inkluzivismus–pluralismus,” *Studia theologica* 22(2020), no. 3: 181.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Miroslav Volf, *Allah: A Christian Response* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Steven Firmin, “Do Muslims and Christians Worship the Same God? Problems and Promises of Miroslav Volf’s Views from a Reformed Augustinian Perspective,” *CMCS Research Briefings* 2019, no. 11: 4–5, <https://www.cmcsoxford.org.uk/resources/researchbriefings>; Gavin D’Costa, “Do Christians and Muslims Believe in the Same God? Reflections on Miroslav Volf’s *Allah: A Christian Response*,” *Islam and Christian – Muslim Relations* 24(2013), no. 2: 151–160; Pavel Hošek, “Do Christians and Muslims Believe in the Same God?” *Communio Viatorum* 55(2013), no. 3: 291–307; Šenkyřík, *Současná*, 181, note no. 55.

And there is none like unto Him.” This text is interesting for several reasons. On the one hand, in terms of terminology, the attribute ‘one and only’ gives the impression that it could be derived from the Old Testament (cf. Dt 6:4, known as the *shema*); the attribute ‘eternal’ seems to refer to the meaning of ‘completeness,’ i.e., a reality that is not disturbed inside or outside, rather than to the temporal ‘delimitation’; the verb ‘generate’ refers to physical birth. The last part expresses God’s absolute transcendence.

Monotheism in the Quran is characterized as ‘faith’ in God ontologically unique and one in himself, which means proclaiming the unity and uniqueness of God, without other competitors or collaborators in the creation and rule over the world, without origin or end, unmixed with the created world. What is particularly interesting is the relationship of terminology with the Old Testament and its basic core of faith. The perspective is similar and at the same time different, because God in the Quran does not establish any specific relationship with a particular nation. It is impossible to enter into a dialogue with him: he is never ‘you’; he always remains transcendent.<sup>6</sup> However, these two characteristics do not mean that it is a God other than that of Judaism or Christianity.

According to the author, the different understanding of monotheism in the Judeo-Christian religion and Islam shows that it is inaccurate to refer to Judaism, Christianity and Islam as ‘monotheistic religions.’<sup>7</sup>

K. Dučák refers to the documents of the Second Vatican Council and gives a negative answer to the issue. According to him, none of the above documents explicitly states that Muslims profess the God that we Catholics profess.<sup>8</sup>

We should agree with the author that it is ideal to have a Magisterial document comment on a certain topic as accurately as possible, because this eliminates or at least substantially narrows the scope for uncertainty or diverse interpretations.

K. Dučák further argues that note 5 refers to Pope Gregory VII, who wrote that both Muslims and Christians believe and profess, albeit in different ways, the one God.<sup>9</sup> The fact that Muslims do not recognize three divine

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Valentino Cottini, “Bible a Korán,” *Teologické texty* 2008, no. 4, <https://www.teologicke-texty.cz/casopis/2008-4/Bible-a-Koran.html>

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, note no. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Karol Dučák, “Vyznávají moslimovia kresťanského Boha?” *Duchovný pastier* 2018, 1: 27.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. S. Gregorios VII., “Epist. III, 21 ad Anazir (Al-Nāšir), regem Mauritaniae,” *Concilium Vaticanum II, Declaratio Nostra Aetate*, 3; Dučák, *Vyznávají*, 27–28.

persons in God cannot be considered a valid argument against the faith of Christians and Muslims in the same God. The author writes, however, that monotheism, faith in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is common for both Catholics and Muslims.<sup>10</sup>

This author's article shows that the reason for the negative answer that Christians and Muslims do not profess the same God is that Muslims do not profess faith in three divine persons. It follows from the author's arguments that he does not deny the fact that Christians and Muslims believe in the same God, but emphasizes the fact that the content of our faith in God is not the same and that we worship him differently. This, however, goes beyond our subject, which only concerns whether Christians and Muslims believe in the same God, not whether they believe in him in exactly the same way or worship him in the same way.

I would compare it to the question: "Who knew Pope John Paul II – Cardinal S. Dziwisz or I?" and a reply to it: "Both, although the personal secretary of the pontiff knew him much better than I who had personally seen him about six times." To claim that I did not know John Paul II because I did not know him as his secretary is wrong because the question was not who knew this Pope better, but only who knew him.

## 1.2 ACCEPTING FAITH IN THE SAME GOD

Other contemporary authors claim that Christianity and Islam share a common belief in one God the Creator.<sup>11</sup> Christians and Muslims believe in the same God but worship him according to their ideas of his uniqueness.<sup>12</sup>

The decisive word of the Islamic faith is 'Allah,' 'God.' The theoretical reasoning between Christians and Muslims always raises the question: Is the God of Jews and Christians also the God of Muslims? The spontaneous answer is: Yes, it is the same God. Yet it cannot be concealed that there are educated Christians, even theologians, who answer the question: No.

God is absolutely transcendent in Islam. All action in this world is without limits of the action of God himself. Surah 112 summarizes God's radicality:

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Dučák, *Vyznávají*, 28.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Barbara Marcinkowska, "Analogie i genealogie modlitwy w trzech religiach monoteistycznych," *Tarnowskie Studia Teologiczne* 35(2016), no. 2: 103, <https://czasopisma.upjp2.edu.pl/tarnowskiestudiateologiczne/article/view/2107/2062>

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Alojz Frankovský, "Antitrinitárny monoteizmus islamu," in Alojz Frankovský, *Boh – Trojica – Stvorenie* (Spišská Kapitula: Kňazský seminár biskupa Jána Vojtašáka, 1999), 58.

In the name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful.  
 Say, "He is God, the One. God, the Absolute."  
 [...] nor was He begotten.  
 And there is none comparable to Him.

The text of Surah 5, verse 109, states: "God [...] You are the knower of all that is Unseen."

Christians profess God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and Jesus Christ; Muslims profess God and his Messenger Muhammad. The Suras of the Quran speak in the name of God the Gracious.<sup>13</sup> K. Cragg considers it desirable that Christians and Muslims pray together to one God. However, this does not mean that he relativizes theological differences in the statements about God in both religions. The mere possibility of finding differences and concordances is possible, according to him, only based on that they are testimonies relating to the same entity.<sup>14</sup>

In the first statement<sup>15</sup> of the Muslim profession of faith,<sup>16</sup> it is necessary to state important common things that the declaration *Nostra Aetate*, in reference to the quotations of the Quran, states the following:<sup>17</sup>

The Church regards with esteem [...] the Moslems. They adore the one God (cf. Quran 112,1), living and subsisting in Himself (cf. Quran 3,2); merciful (cf. Quran 1,1) and all-powerful (cf. Quran 60,5), the Creator of heaven and earth (cf. Quran 46,33), [...].<sup>18</sup>

How many common things exist in Christian and Islamic theology in the sense of the monotheism that is shown in the treatise of Christian dogmatics 'On One God.'<sup>19</sup>

Islam's fundamental element is the belief in God's uniqueness: "There is no God except Allah. He is God (Allah), the One and Only. Allah, the Eter-

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Hans Waldenfels, "Boží věc v dnešním kontextu islámu," *Teologické texty* 2007, no. 3, <https://www.teologicketexty.cz/casopis/2007-3/Bozi-vec-v-dnesnim-kontextu-islamu.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Vít Machálek, "Nový přístup k islámu a jeho Prorokovi u křesťanských orientalistů W. M. Watta a K. Cragga," *Studia theologica* 15(2013), no. 2: 96.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Peter Antes, "Rozdíly mezi křesťanstvím a islámem," *Teologické texty* 1993, no. 3: 94–95.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Rudolf Macúch, *Islam a křesťanstvo. Historické a kultúrno-náboženské štúdie o islame* (Liptovský Mikuláš: Tranoscius, 1950), 67.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Antes, *Rozdíly*, 95.

<sup>18</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Declaration Nostra Aetate*, 3; cf. Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium*, 16.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Antes, *Rozdíly*, 95.

nal, Absolute. He is not begotten. There is none like unto Him” (Surah 112). This is pure monotheism.

Belief in God’s uniqueness is fundamental to Islam. Allah is the universal God, the Lord of the universe. He has other names in the Quran, such as merciful, gracious, eternal, powerful, etc. According to Muslim theologians, the number of these Quranic epithets, together with the name of Allah, is equal to 100. All of Allah’s attributes represent the résumé of Muslim theology. They describe the individual qualities of the only God of Muslims in which they are contained: omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, eternity, etc. He is a strict judge, but also an inexhaustible source of grace, whose manifestation is the existence of this world and all its creatures.

He is the Supreme Being, the only God, the Creator of the world. The basis of the Quranic doctrine on the creation of the world is the biblical view of the creation of the world. Allah ascended to the heavens after the creation of all creation.<sup>20</sup> Even this teaching of the Quran from creatology, theological anthropology and eschatology, which is largely identical to Judaism and Christianity, testifies in favour of faith in the same God in all three major monotheistic religions.

## 2. THE VIEW OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF ISLAM

In seeking a solution to our question, also worth noting are the positions of the representatives of Islam. They contain arguments that can help in the search for a Catholic position. According to them, God is unique, so it is impossible to discuss the divine qualities (righteous, merciful, etc.) because they are without analogy to what is known to us.<sup>21</sup> This claim is in line with the Catholic position.

This was reflected, for example, in the fact that the representative of Sunni Muslims, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, who signed the *Document on Human Fraternity* with Pope Francis, also reacted positively to the apostolic journey of Pope Francis to Iraq in 2021. He sent the following message through a social network: “My brother’s journey to Iraq sends a message of solidarity to all the people of Iraq. I pray to Almighty Al-

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Macúch, *Islam*, 60–61.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Antes, *Rozdíly*, 95.

lah [...].”<sup>22</sup> The words “to Almighty Allah” very much resemble the beginning of the Apostolic Symbol in which the only attribute of God is mentioned: omnipotence.<sup>23</sup> The confession of God’s attribute of Allah, God – omnipotence – is one of the common signs of God that both religions profess.

### 3. LETTER FROM GREGORY VII TO THE KING OF MAURITANIA

The Catholic Church has been commenting on the subject of relations with Muslims mainly since 1965 when *Nostra Aetate* was published containing a quotation from the letter from Gregory VII in 1076.<sup>24</sup> The introductory sentence of point 3 of *Nostra Aetate* contains a statement declaring Muslims to be believers in the only existing God, with reference to the document of Gregory VII. It states:<sup>25</sup> “God, the Creator of all, [...] Almighty God, [...] is well pleased to approve in us most of all that besides loving God, men love other men, [...].”<sup>26</sup>

The most important part is the passage where he expresses his faith in the only God for both the writer and the recipient of the letter. The text has become a point of reference in the question of whether *Nostra Aetate* is inclined to the idea that Christians and Muslims profess the same God. Gregory VII first declares God the Creator as the originator of all good things. This God, according to his words, enlightened the mind of the Muslim ruler: “God, the Creator of all, has inspired to your heart this act of kindness [...].” Furthermore, the Pope recalls the golden rule (cf. Mt 7:14): “For the almighty God [...].”

Here comes the key sentence. Both the writer and the addressee are obliged to express this love for others. The argument for this claim is found in relation to the one God: “We and you must show [...] to the other nations

<sup>22</sup> RV/TKKBS, *Velký imám Al Azharu podporil pápežovu cestu do Iraku*, <https://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cisloclanku=20210305028>.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *Catechismus of the Catholic Church*, 268.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. St. Gregory VII, “Letter XXI to Anzir (Nacir), King of Mauritania,” in Second Vatican Council, *Declaration Nostra Aetate*, 3, note no. 5.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Jaroslav Franc, “Qui unum Deum, licet diverso modo, credimus et confitemur papeže Řehoře VII. v kontextu současných vztahů křesťanství a islámu,” *Studia theologica* 20(2018), no. 1: 53–54.

<sup>26</sup> Josef Neuner, Jacques Dupuis, *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Faith* (Bangalore: St. Peter’s Seminary, 1973), par. 1002.

an example of this charity, for we believe and confess one God, although in different ways, [...] and worship Him daily as the creator of all ages.”

Both traditions in one God believe in one God in different ways and worship him as the creator of the ages. This fact of the existence of one God is the basis of mankind’s unity, here according to the Pope’s words with reference to the Epistle to the Ephesians: “For he is our peace, he who made both one (2:14).”

The letter concludes in the last sentence with the wish that God would bring him into the arms of Abraham after his death. Yet, what is the authority of the letter in the context of the Magisterium? The question of the dogmatic binding nature of the text or its position in the doctrine of the Magisterium is necessary. The authority of this document was confirmed by the participants of the Second Vatican Council in *Nostra Aetate* by an unquestionable majority when they accepted not only the text of the declaration, but also the endnotes. The key point of the letter is that Christians and Muslims believe in one God, so they are monotheists. The consensus is that both traditions worship him as the Creator, albeit in different ways. However, this does not invalidate the form of unity expressed above. The claim is supported by a quote from the Epistle to the Ephesians (Ef 2:14), to highlight the dimension of unity that is possible only in God. By emphasizing “other ways of believing in God and other ways of professing God,” it draws attention to the unmistakable differences between Christians and Muslims, even in the key point of faith in one God.

The letter also does not ask whether Muslims and Christians believe in the same God and, therefore, does not address the issue. However, we can say that the Pope speaks of one God (monotheism) to whom we relate differently (variety of religions).

Gregory VII probably understands the situation as Christians together with the Muslims relating to the only existing God, but not overlooking the existing differences in order to avoid the mistake of indifferentism. An update of the Pope’s understanding of the signs of the time can be found in the declaration *Nostra Aetate* and its subsequent reading of the traditions of the Church, exemplified by the words of John Paul II.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Franc, *Qui unum Deum*, 54–60.



#### 4. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

##### 4.1 DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION *LUMEN GENTIUM*

The Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* supports the wording of *Nostra Aetate* when it states:<sup>28</sup> “The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place amongst these there are 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.”<sup>29</sup>

a) If together with Muslims we adore the one God, it can only be the true God, otherwise, it would be idolatry by us.

b) If we adore the one God, we believe in the same God because he is the only one, there is no other.

##### 4.2 DECLARATION *NOSTRA AETATE*

The relationship of the Church to Islam is summarized in the third part of the document.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to the above, the following words are important: “[...] they take pains to submit [...] to even His [...] decrees, just as Abraham, [...], submitted to God. [...] they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. [...] they [...] worship God [...]”<sup>31</sup>

Even though the declaration *Nostra Aetate* was not created to answer a specific theological question of faith in the same God,<sup>32</sup> its testimony has a valuable statement from the Catholic point of view. The introductory sentence of point 3 of *Nostra Aetate* declares Muslims to be believers in the only existing God, with reference to the document by Pope Gregory VII.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 52.

<sup>29</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 16.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Franc, *Qui unum Deum*, 49–51.

<sup>31</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate*, 3.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Franc, *Qui unum Deum*, 52; Luboš Kropáček, “Rané křesťanství a vznik islámu,” *Teologické texty* 1999, no. 4: 110.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Franc, *Qui unum Deum*, 52.

### 4.3 POST-COUNCIL POPES

#### 4.3.1 Paul VI

Paul VI suggested the idea of faith in the same God in many places when, in his speech to the Moroccan ambassador in 1976, he addressed the Moroccan Muslims as<sup>34</sup> “brothers in faith in one God.”<sup>35</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Allocution of John Paul II in Casablanca

In addition to the discussion about textual sources, it is also necessary to look at Church Tradition, where we can find the reading of *Nostra Aetate* as a continuity of tradition.<sup>36</sup> It includes the address of John Paul II in Casablanca on August 19, 1985, where the answer to the question asked was formulated very explicitly.<sup>37</sup> In it, the pope stated that “Christians and Muslims [...], we have many things in common [...]. For us, Abraham is a very model of faith in God. [...] We believe in the same God, the one God, the living God, the God who created the world [...]”<sup>38</sup> There are also other documents, including many addresses of popes.<sup>39</sup>

The first and second chapters of the address of John Paul II, like the introductory passage of the letter from Gregory VII quoted above, are a form of confession of faith that is acceptable both to Christians and Muslims. Therefore, John Paul II communicates in a way that is understandable to the addressees. However, John Paul II is not the first to directly comment on the issue: “We believe in the same God.”<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, 62.

<sup>35</sup> “Nous aimerions donc que nos vœux, à travers Lui, s’étendent à tous les musulmans marocains, [...], nos frères dans la foi au Dieu unique”; Paulus VI, “Allocutio Ad Excellentissimum Virum Youssef Ben Abbès, Summo Pontifici crediti muneris testes tradentem Litteras quibus apud Sedem Apostolicam cum auctoritate Legatus Marochiensis Civitatis constitutus est,” *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 68(1976), no. 6: 421; cf. Franc, *Qui unum Deum*, 61–62.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Franc, *Qui unum Deum*, 60.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Ioannes Paulus II, “Albae domi, in Marochio, ad iuvenes musulimos habita,” *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 78(1986), no. 1: 96.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Ludovít Malík, “Pápež prichádza do krajiny františkánskych prvomučeníkov,” *Katolícke noviny* 2019, 13: 6. “Nous croyons au même Dieu, le Dieu unique, le Dieu vivant, le Dieu qui crée les mondes [...]”; Ioannes Paulus II, *Albae*, 96.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Mezinárodní teologická komise, *Křesťanství a ostatní náboženství: z roku 1996* (Praha: Krystal OP, 1999).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Franc, *Qui unum Deum*, 61.

John Paul II expressed this idea at a symposium on the concept of holiness in Christianity and Islam in 1985, where he declared that our God is one and the same, so we are brothers and sisters in Abraham's faith.<sup>41</sup>

If the theological discussion on the issue of one God for Christians and Muslims is being conducted today, the documents of the Magisterium are an important source of theological reflection.

The Magisterium offers theologians two important statements by Gregory VII and more recently John Paul II regarding the issue of the one God of Christians and Muslims. Both places have the character of proclamations of faith addressed to non-Christians.

Pope Benedict XVI described *Nostra Aetate* as the magna carta of dialogue with Islam at the 2005 World Youth Day in Cologne.

Christians and Muslims believe in and profess one God. However, the aim of this article is not to deal with the topic of what they believe in and profess in such a different way that it is impossible to share this relationship in the sacramental practice of the Church.

The testimonies of the popes of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries confirm that, together with Muslims, we profess one God, but at the same time, they leave open space for different ways to realize the relationship between God and his creation. The Magisterial texts open up a space for theological pluralism in which further discussions can take place. In doing so, false irenicism must be avoided, claiming that Christians and Muslims believe in the same God without distinction.<sup>42</sup>

#### 4.3.3 Pope Francis' attitude towards the topic

Pope Francis and The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb signed a joint statement in Abu Dhabi on February 4, 2019, the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*. The introductory part of the document begins with the words: "Through faith in God, who has created the universe [...] and all human beings (equal on account of his mercy), [...]." The signatories explain how their *Document on Human Fraternity* was born based on the mentioned transcendental value. "It is a document that invites all persons who have faith in God." The main part begins with a reference

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Address of Pope John Paul II to the Participants in the Colloquium on "Holiness in Christianity and Islam,"* [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1985/may/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19850509\\_partecipanti-simposio.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1985/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19850509_partecipanti-simposio.html); Franc, *Qui unum Deum*, 61.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Franc, *Qui unum Deum*, 62–67.

to the name of God: “In the name of God who has created all human beings [...]” After the name of God, the document also formulates: “In the name of innocent human life that God has forbidden to kill [...]. In the name of the poor [...] those most in need whom God has commanded us to help [...]”

The document continues: “In the name of freedom, that God has given to all human beings; [...]. In the name of God [...], Al-Azhar al-Sharif and the Muslims of the East and West, together with the Catholic Church and the Catholics of the East and West, declare [...]”

On behalf of the believers in God, the signatories address leading world figures: “We, who believe in God and in the final meeting with Him and His judgment, [...]. The [...] most important aim of religions is to believe in God, to honour Him and to invite all [...] to believe that this universe depends on a God who governs it. He is the Creator who has formed us with His divine wisdom [...]”

They also say that the Creator gave us the gift of life: “We [...] call [...] to stop [...] using the name of God to justify acts of murder [...] We ask this on the basis of our common belief in God [...]. God, the Almighty [...] does not want His name to be used to terrorize people. [...]”

In the conclusion of the *Document on Human Fraternity*, Pope Francis and The Grand Imam Ahmad al Tadjib add a wish: “Al-Azhar and the Catholic Church ask that this Document become the object of research and reflection in all schools, universities [...]”<sup>43</sup> This is an important expression of the document inviting us to study it. At the same time, it provides a number of recent answers to the question presented. It also contains the conclusion of the declaration: “This Declaration may be a witness to the greatness of faith in God that unites [...] this Declaration may be a sign of the closeness [...] between all who believe that God has created us [...]”<sup>44</sup>

The prefect emeritus of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, G. L. Müller, explained that it is sensational that the supreme authorities of the Catholic Church and the high religious and academic authorities of the Islamic world have submitted a joint text that requires consent from members of both religions and obliges them in their conscience. For Catholics, the document does not constitute an act of the Church’s Magisterium, which

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<sup>43</sup> Vatican News, *Dokument z Abú Zabí o ľudskom bratstve od pápeža Františka a imáma Al Tadjiba 4. februára 2019 v Abú Zabí*, <https://www.vaticannews.va/sk/svet/news/2019-02/papez-frantisek-abu-zabi-dokument-ludske-bratstvo-al-tajjib.html>; *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living together*, [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco\\_20190204\\_documento-fratellanza-umana.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html).

<sup>44</sup> *A Document*.

concerns the revealed doctrine of faith and morals that would have to be adopted “by divine and Catholic faith” (*LG* 25; *DV* 10). In the document, the pope also accepted as the supreme authority in the interpretation of the natural moral law. Therefore, the text is not a private opinion of the pope, which would not demand anything from Catholics in their understanding of the world based on the Catholic faith. Thus, Catholics rightly expect theological guidance in this extraordinary case.

The “*Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living together*” should be a<sup>45</sup> “declaration of good [...] aspirations [...],” so that “all persons who have faith in God [...] in the awareness of the great divine grace that makes [...].”<sup>46</sup> The supporting columns of the declaration are faith in God and his grace. Only in faith in the good and merciful God, the almighty Creator of the world, who will judge all people at the end, can the nihilism of materialistic philosophies be overcome. Yet, fraternity springs from the faith in God in the Christian as well as the Islamic Tradition. Believers in God, the almighty and benevolent Creator, must oppose the self-destruction of humanity with the principle of universal fraternity. It is significant that the Pope and the Grand Imam draw consequences from faith in God in both religions, Christianity and the Islam, which Benedict XVI formulated in his lecture in Regensburg in 2006 as a cognitive principle of interreligious dialogue: with faith in God, who founded the dignity of every human being in the act of creation as a gift of participation in being and as a communication of his grace and goodness.<sup>47</sup>

Pope Francis told the public representatives of the country during the Apostolic Journey to Iraq in 2021 that fraternal coexistence requires an effort to talk to each other based on the deepest identity we have, the identity of the sons of one God and Creator.<sup>48</sup> These words are identical to the statement in the declaration *Nostra Aetate*.<sup>49</sup>

In an address at an interreligious meeting in the ancient Ur, referring to the patriarch Abraham, he met with the representatives of Muslims and religious minorities in Iraq, to whom he said: “This [...] place brings us [...] to the sources of God’s work, to the birth of our religions. [...] It was here, that

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. Gerhard Ludwig Müller, “Das Abu Dhabi Dokument. Eine katholische Lesehilfe,” *Communio* 2020, no. 3, <https://www.communio.de/inhalte.php?jahrgang=2020&ausgabe=3&artikel=5>.

<sup>46</sup> *A Document*.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Müller, *Das Abu*.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. TKKBS, “Príhovor pápeža verejným predstaviteľom Iraku a diplomatom,” <https://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cislocianku=20210305026>.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate*, 3.

Abraham heard God's call [...]. We are the fruits of that call [...]."<sup>50</sup> Pope Francis stated that not only "Jews, Christians and Muslims,"<sup>51</sup> but "together with our brothers and sisters of other religions, honour our father Abraham [...]."<sup>52</sup> Other religions that honour our father Abraham are probably religious minorities present in Iraq – e.g., the Yazidi or Sabeian Mandaean communities, whom he explicitly mentions in his address<sup>53</sup> – at least some of whom attended this meeting. Both of these religions or religious communities are monotheistic together with Sikhism, but we do not claim that, together with Jews, Christians and Muslims, they believe in the same God. The term "descendants of Abraham"<sup>54</sup> speaks in favour of believing in the same God in the three major monotheistic religions, unlike other words "and the representatives of different religions,"<sup>55</sup> about which this is not true. Also, the formulations "This is true religiosity: to worship God," "In today's world, which often [...] presents distorted images of the Most High," and "The Patriarch Abraham, who today brings us together in unity"<sup>56</sup> implicitly contain faith in a common God.

With the words "From the land of our father Abraham, let us affirm that God is merciful [...],"<sup>57</sup> he refers to another characteristic of God from the declaration *Nostra Aetate*, common to both religions, which is mercy.<sup>58</sup>

The reference of all three major monotheistic religions to Abraham is also a significant element, confirming faith in the same God.

All those present at the conclusion of the interreligious meeting in Ur rose to<sup>59</sup> the "Prayer of the children of Abraham"<sup>60</sup> addressed on behalf of all in Arabic by the priest.<sup>61</sup> There are several statements in it testifying to the confession of faith in the same God:

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<sup>50</sup> Holy See, "Apostolic Journey to the Republic of Iraq: Interreligious meeting," <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/events/event.dir.html/content/vaticanevents/en/2021/3/6/iraq-incontro-interreligioso.html#PRAYER>.

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. ibidem.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>55</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate*, 3.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. RV/TKKBS, *V abrahámovskom Ure sa pápež stretol s predstaviteľmi náboženstiev*, <https://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cislocianku=20210306004>.

<sup>60</sup> Holy See, *Apostolic*.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. RV/TKKBS, *V abrahámovskom*.

Almighty God, our Creator [...] as children of Abraham, Jews, Christians and Muslims together with other believers [...], we thank you for having given us Abraham [...] to be our common father in faith. [...] We ask you, the God of our father Abraham and our God, to grant us [...] faith [...] that opens our hearts to you [...]. Make each of us a witness of your [...] care for all [...]. Welcome into your abode of peace [...] all those who have died [...]. Assist the authorities in the effort to [...] find the victims of kidnapping [...]. Help us to care for the earth [...]. Guide our hands in the work of rebuilding this country, and grant us the strength needed to help [...].<sup>62</sup>

### CONCLUSION

This article presents arguments to support the view that Jews, Christians and Muslims believe in and profess the same God. They are based primarily on many of God's qualities, such as omnipotence, omniscience, eternity, justice, mercy and many others, which are accepted by Jews, Christians and Muslims. The theme of the different ways in which the three main monotheistic religions worship God is not an obstacle because it is a different area, although closely related to the topic. There is no Magisterium document either in the past or in the present that explicitly denies that Christians and Muslims believe in the same God. On the contrary, several old and new documents of the Magisterium and the works of many theologians give their sufficiently clear opinion in favour of a positive answer.

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<sup>62</sup> Holy See, *Apostolic Journey*.

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## CHRZEŚCIJAŃSKA I MUŻULMAŃSKA WIARA W TEGO SAMEGO BOGA PO SOBORZE WATYKAŃSKIM II

### Streszczenie

Swoim artykułem autor włącza się w debatę na temat tego, czy chrześcijaństwo i muzułmanstwo wierzą w tego samego Boga? Najpierw przedstawia opinie autorów zajmujących stanowisko negatywne, a następnie tych, którzy wyrażają pogląd pozytywny. Przedstawia także jedną opinię strony muzułmańskiej na ten temat. W dalszej części artykułu, na podstawie listu papieża Grzegorza VII, Soboru Watykańskiego II, przemówienia Pawła VI, wypowiedzi Jana Pawła II, Dokumentu o ludzkim braterstwie dla pokoju światowego i współistnienia, przemówienia papieża Franciszka na spotkaniu międzyreligijnym w Ur (zakończonym Modlitwą synów Abrahama) twierdzi, że istotnie chrześcijaństwo i muzułmanstwo wierzą w tego samego Boga. Autor nie zajmuje się kwestią tego, iż każda religia wierzy w tego samego Boga w inny sposób. Sprzeciwiając się podważaniu opinii o wspólnej wierze obu religii monoteistycznych w tego samego Boga na podstawie faktu, że muzułmanstwo nie uznają Trójcy Świętej, autor zwraca uwagę, że Żydzi też w nią nie wierzą, a jednocześnie nikt nie kwestionuje tego, że Żydzi i chrześcijaństwo wierzą w tego samego Boga.

**Słowa kluczowe:** chrześcijaństwo; muzułmanstwo; Bóg; Sobór Watykański II; papież.