

**Are You a Roman Catholic or an Ecumenical Catholic? (The answer might surprise you.)**

Your beliefs will help you to identify which tradition you are really following. These questions are by no means a full review of the differences between the Ecumenical Catholic and Roman Catholic understanding of faith. There are many other questions that could be asked, but this is a sampling of questions that might reveal your attitudes/beliefs, allowing you to see if you are more aligned with the Ecumenical Catholic or Roman Catholic thinking.

**Column A**

1. I believe the Pope is infallible in all matters of faith and moral practice and that he has direct spiritual authority over all others and me.
2. I believe that artificial birth control is a sin even when used by married couples.
3. I believe that Catholic marriage is forever and that one is only released of the bond and free to re-marry if one receives an annulment from the Tribunal.
4. I believe that only the Pope and Catholic bishops should have authority in the church and that lay people should not share in the church's governance.
5. I believe that only celibate men should be priests.
6. I believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the one true church.
7. I believe that only Catholics should receive Holy Communion at Mass and that Protestants should not be allowed to receive communion at Catholic Masses.
8. I believe that a Catholic must consistently obey Catholic teaching and the canon law of the church, in order to be "Catholic".
9. I believe that sex between unmarried people is always a serious or mortal sin, and that even mature adults in committed, romantic relationships are sinning if they have sex before marriage.
10. I believe that homosexuality is contrary to natural law.
11. I believe that my salvation is tied to being Roman Catholic and leaving the Church may jeopardize my going to heaven.

**Column B**

1. I believe the Pope is an important spiritual leader & teacher of the church, and though my decisions of faith or morals differ with his, I can still remain Catholic.
2. I believe that the decision to use artificial birth control is best decided by couples in married and/or committed relationships.
3. I believe divorce is often tragic, but not an unpardonable sin and that divorced people who remarry should be fully welcomed into the church and its sacraments.
4. I believe that lay people of the church should have a voice in the church's governance. Clergy are accountable to the people, structurally, morally and in every way.
5. I believe that priests may be celibate or married, male or female.
6. I believe the diversity of religions and denominations reflects various valid expressions of faith and worship, whether Catholic or not.
7. I believe that Jesus is the Host of the table and that Holy Communion at Mass should be open to all baptized Christians and sincere people of faith.
8. I believe that a Catholic is free to follow his/her conscience as well as Church teaching, including matters of faith and morals. I believe that one's conscience, sincere study of the issue and a committed relationship with God may lead to a holy, good and right decision.
9. I believe that expressing one's love for another through sexual sharing is healthy and holy, and is to be encouraged between mature adults who are married and/or in committed long-term relationships.
10. I believe that gay and lesbian people are "wonderfully made" by our loving Creator.
11. I believe I can be a non-Roman Catholic-Christian like thousands of others around the world, live with integrity, and be saved.

If you scored higher in column B than column A, then you are in the faith tradition of the Ecumenical Catholics. If you scored higher in column A than column B, you are more aligned with the Roman Catholic thinking.

### **What is the Ecumenical Catholic Communion?**

The Ecumenical Catholic Communion traces its past to the historic Catholic traditions of [Conciliarism](#). The Conciliarists of the Middle Ages held the most ancient tradition of Christianity: that the highest authority of the church resides in the church councils in which the leaders (i.e., Bishops, Church Councils, etc.) of the whole church join together to affirm its teaching and governance.

In 1870, when the Bishop of Rome (the Pope) declared his authority to be higher than all Church Councils, a group of Catholics gathered together to form the Union of Utrecht. They became known as the *Old Catholics* because they held to the more ancient teaching about church authority (i.e., Church Councils as governing body) and refuted the dogma of papal infallibility.

This “old Catholic” movement spread throughout the world, also making its way to America, growing over the decades. Finally, in 2003, a group of independent Catholic communities who were inheritors of this Old Catholic tradition met in Orange, California to draft a constitution and become the Ecumenical Catholic Communion (ECC). The ECC now has parishes and other faith communities throughout the world to bear witness to the ancient Catholic tradition (i.e., the first 1000 years of Christianity), that included the election of bishops by the people, priests who were married or celibate, and a variety of ways to be Catholic and profess faith in Christ and his church.

The Ecumenical Catholic Communion celebrates the Mass and the seven sacraments, is led by bishops and priests, and welcomes all.

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