

Q&A

***The Balts:* Is there a difference between spirituality and religion? Can a person be religious without having spirituality and vice-versa?**

Archbishop: A friend explained "...imagine you're a fish, spirituality is the ocean and religion is a fish tank..." Religion defines the parameters of what are acceptable practices, doctrines, rules, explanations for undefined things such as life hereafter, the purpose of our existence. Religious traditions also provide a community or a structure and a sense of meaning in which an individual may choose to work.

It has been said that for one to enter a cathedral and see the glory of its stained glass, how the light enters and illuminates the interior; its altars dedicated to the various saints with elaborate marble work or the various richly decorated icons is in and of itself a spiritual experience. Religion could possibly be the structured form of Spirituality, and Spirituality the unstructured form of Religion... Because the two are inseparable it is inevitable that spirituality will become a religious practice and religion can lead a soul to spiritual practices.

***The Balts:* What is the Church's view on life after death, i.e. heaven and hell?**

Archbishop: The Catechism teaches that Heaven is the state of everlasting Life in which we see God face to face, in the company of the Angels and Saints (*Rev 21:3*). Hell is the state to which the wicked are condemned, in which they are deprived of the sight of God (*Dan 12: 2; Mk 9: 43-48; Mt 10:28*).

***The Balts:* Extraterrestrial sightings more noticed—if speculated that we are not the only civilisation, how would that affect our religious beliefs?**

Archbishop: What should be our primary focus is that we treat our peers and other creatures with whom we share this planet with the grace, respect and dignity they deserve. That's the first thing. Extraterrestrial sightings only highlight that we are merely a speck

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in the solar system. Should that change our religious beliefs? No. It should teach us humility and I hope it will. But humanity has an ego the size of a mustard seed with the potential for disastrous effects. Perhaps I'm being a pessimist...

***The Balts:* Where do we stand with regard to the apocryphal books? Do they have a place in our religious studies?**

Archbishop: This has been addressed more eloquently by others www.catholicnewsagency.com/resource/55989/the-apocrypha.

***The Balts:* Hindu Scriptures, i.e. Gita and Vedas are the oldest religious texts in the world—also Zoroaster religion—how did they originate? Their writers guided by Angels?**

Archbishop: I would say there are wonderful resources to refer to on the internet regarding this subject.

***The Balts:* How do we view Eastern religions, Confucianism ect?**

Archbishop: Many of the adherents to Christianity have this annoying *hang-up*, placing itself in the exclusive category of the 'only true religion' and therefore by defect treat suspiciously anything with a religious component contrary to its own. We should be willing to read on these religions, study their philosophies and teachers with an open mind and without fear of contamination.

***The Balts:* Define religion?**

Archbishop: Religion is a system of moral beliefs, also I have answered this in the first question.

Mr & Mrs Ian Balt · Abp Rima Tamaiparea-Puki · 8 June 2021