

DANGER AND DIALOGUE

AMERICAN CATHOLIC PUBLIC OPINION AND PORTRAYALS OF ISLAM

BRIDGE

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By Jordan Denari Duffner
THE BRIDGE INITIATIVE

Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding
Georgetown University
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AMERICAN CATHOLICS' VIEWS OF ISLAM AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

- Nearly half of Catholics can't name any similarities between Catholicism and Islam, or say explicitly that there are no commonalities.
- When asked about their overall impression of Muslims, three in ten Catholics admit to having unfavorable views. Only 14% of Catholics say they have favorable views. 45% have "neither favorable nor unfavorable" views. 11% are unsure.
- Catholics are less likely than the general American public to know a Muslim personally.
- A majority of Catholics correctly identify prayer and fasting as important parts of Muslim life, but also incorrectly believe that Muslims worship the Prophet Muhammad.
- Catholics who know a Muslim personally, or who have participated in dialogue or community service with Muslims, often have very different views about Islam and interfaith dialogue than those who haven't interacted with Muslims.
- Those surveyed who consume content from Catholic media outlets have more unfavorable views of Muslims than those who don't.

CATHOLIC MEDIA OUTLETS' PORTRAYAL OF ISLAM ONLINE

- From October 2014 to September 2015, nearly 800 articles referencing Islam or Muslims appeared on major American Catholic websites.
- In prominent Catholic outlets, half of the time the word "Islamic" is used, it is in reference to the Islamic State terrorist group.
- The headlines of Catholic articles dealing with Islam have a negative sentiment overall, and the primary emotion conveyed is anger. Of the online Catholic outlets examined, *Catholic Answers* and *Catholic Culture* had the most negative sentiment in their titles related to Islam. Only one outlet had positive headlines about Islam: *American Catholic*.
- Often, the words, gestures, and activities of Pope Francis frame discussions of Islam in Catholic outlets. Mentioning Pope Francis often, or not at all, seems to impact the sentiment conveyed in headlines about Islam. The outlets with the most negative sentiment in their headlines about Islam were also those that mention Pope Francis the least, and the outlet with the most positive sentiment mentioned Pope Francis the most.

KEY FINDINGS

FOR-SALE RESOURCES OF ISLAM

- There are over 100 books, audio programs, and DVDs from American Catholic publishers that discuss Islam. Many of these attempt to introduce Catholics to Islam or compare Islam and Christianity.
- The two books on Islam sold by the most Catholic publishers are *Inside Islam*, by Daniel Ali and Robert Spencer, and *The Bible and the Qur'an* by Jacques Jomier.
- The top two words used in book titles about Islam are “world” and “dialogue,” suggesting that Islam is viewed a distant religion but one that Catholics can be connected to through conversation and relationship.
- Differences between Christianity and Islam are often highlighted in introductory and comparative materials. “Differences” is the most frequent word used in the descriptions of these books. Despite the emphasis on differences found in these materials, many of them still intend to encourage Catholic readers to dialogue and work with Muslims.
- The primary emotion in the titles of Catholic books on Islam is fear. The materials that introduce Catholics to Islam or compare Islam and Christianity have an overall negative sentiment in their titles.
- Authors of a plurality of introductory or comparative resources on Islam hoped their readers would engage in dialogue after reading their material. Others hoped readers would evangelize Muslims, grow in their faith, or judge Islam for themselves as a result of digesting the content.

CATHOLIC AUTHORS ON ISLAM & CONNECTIONS TO ISLAMOPHOBIA

- Prominent Catholic authors of introductory materials on Islam take varied approaches to the religion in their work, with some recounting their experiences of dialogue and others focusing on evangelization or how Islam is a threat.
- A number of individuals in the Islamophobia industry have impacted American Catholic discussions about Islam. In some cases, Catholic publishers, news outlets, and prominent figures have promoted their views. The work of author Robert Spencer, who leads an organization that has been named an anti-Muslim hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, has been distributed widely by Catholic outlets and institutions.
- Three Catholics who write regularly on Islam for Catholic outlets maintain connections to anti-Muslim groups and activists.

MATERIALS ON ISLAM IN D.C. CATHOLIC BOOKSTORES

- All three Catholic bookstores in Washington, D.C. sell multiple books on Islam, and say that providing an orthodox Catholic perspective is a criterion for the books they sell.
- Books by Robert Spencer are also sold at two of these bookstores, but it is unclear if those running the bookstores are familiar with his positions or activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge those who made this project possible. Nazir Harb Michel, Bridge Initiative Senior Research Fellow, was instrumental in guiding the research design and methodology. Omar Kanjwal provided critical research assistance in his capacity as a Bridge Initiative intern. Bridge Initiative Director John Esposito provided guidance throughout the research process and gave critical feedback during the writing process. Nathan Lean, the Bridge Initiative's former Research Director, also gave support and advice at the genesis of this project. We are grateful for the support and encouragement of all the staff members of the Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding and Bridge Initiative, and we thank D*MNGOOD for transforming our report into an attractive printed publication.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jordan Denari Duffner is a Research Fellow at Georgetown University's Bridge Initiative. A former Fulbright fellow in Amman, Jordan, Duffner writes about Islamophobia and Catholic-Muslim relations. Her articles have been published in *TIME*, *America*, *Commonweal*, *National Catholic Reporter*, the *Washington Post*, *Crux*, and other outlets. Her forthcoming book with Liturgical Press is *Finding Jesus Among Muslims: Living Out Christianity in Dialogue with Islam*.

“ Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters...”

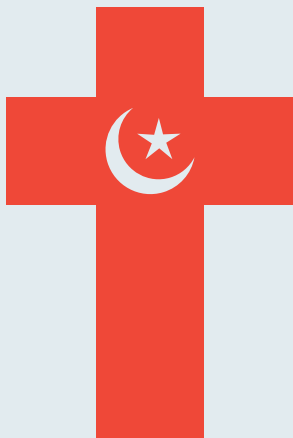
“ Our respect for true followers of Islam should lead us to avoid hateful generalizations...”


“ I believe that it’s not fair to identify Islam with violence. It’s not fair and it’s not true.”

POPE FRANCIS



Introduction





The head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, has had a lot to say about Islam in his three years as pontiff. His strong statements on Islam and bold gestures of welcome to Muslims have garnered wide media attention, drawing much praise but also criticism from his fellow Catholics.

Less attention has been paid, however, to American Catholic attitudes about Islam and Muslims, and to Catholic media portrayals of Islam. Very few academic articles or reports have looked at American Catholic discussions of Islam in a systematic way.¹ No studies look at the materials Catholic publishing houses put out on Islam, not to mention the portrayal of Islam in Catholic news and commentary outlets. Furthermore, available survey data about American Catholics' views of Muslims has been limited.²

We at the Bridge Initiative have taken up the task of filling in these gaps. This report includes groundbreaking polling data on American Catholics' views of Islam, Muslims, and interreligious dialogue. It also examines the portrayals of Islam across American Catholic outlets and publications.

The report seeks to answer a number of questions, including:

- **What do American Catholics believe about Muslims, Islam, and interreligious dialogue?** How might their views on these topics be related to the secular or religious content they consume? Are their views affected by knowing a Muslim personally, or having engaged in interfaith dialogue?
- **How are Islam and Muslims portrayed and discussed in Catholic news media content online and in for-sale Catholic resources?** What topics arise, what words are used, and what sentiments and emotions are conveyed?
- **Who are the most prominent contributors or authors of Catholic resources about Islam? What do they say about the religion?** How widespread is their influence in Catholic circles, and do they influence conversations about Islam in American society more broadly? To what extent, if any, have individuals identified as part of the Islamophobia industry impacted public Catholic discussions about Islam?

Because of our location at Georgetown University, the nation's oldest Catholic and Jesuit university — and at the Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding — we are well situated to undertake this research. Our mission to break down misunderstanding about Muslims and build Muslim-Christian relations compels us to research this subject.

This report aims to shed light on American Catholic discourse about Islam, and to provide a first-time look into the views and opinions American Catholics have about Islam and its followers.

While this report will occasionally reference official statements of the Vatican, its main focus is examining content that is produced by less official Catholic entities and consumed by average American Catholics.

This report's publication comes at an important time. In recent years, the United States has experienced a surge in Islamophobia. As we have documented in other original research, American Muslims have continued to face anti-Muslim political rhetoric, and acts of violence and discrimination.³ The vandalisms that have targeted mosques, the attacks on women, and skepticism in the media about American Muslims' loyalty to their country harken back to the anti-Catholic discrimination of previous generations, when churches and convents were torched and Jesuit priests — like those who lead Georgetown University today — were accused of having plans to subvert American law and bring in foreign, Catholic influences.⁴

We hope that the report's findings prove useful to Catholics individuals and institutions, specifically as they concern:

- **Catholic news outlets, publishing companies, and bookstore owners.** Our comprehensive overview of Catholic content on Islam and Muslims should afford them greater awareness about how Islam and Muslims appear in their content. Our survey on Catholic opinions on Islam will also provide insights into their readers' knowledge of Islam and views of Muslims.
- **Catechists and church leaders.** They will get a view into American Catholics' religious literacy (or lack thereof) about Islam, their views of interreligious dialogue, and Catholics' perceptions of Muslims more generally.
- **Ordinary Catholics.** This report can help them make more informed decisions about the content on Islam they're consuming and potentially sharing with others.



How American Catholics view Islam, Muslims and interreligious dialogue





CHAPTER 1 TAKEAWAYS

1 When asked about similarities between Catholicism and Islam, one in five Catholics say there are **no** similarities.

2 When asked about their overall impression of Muslims, three in ten Catholics admit to having unfavorable views. Only 14% of Catholics say they have favorable views. 45% have “neither favorable nor unfavorable” views. 11% are unsure.

3 Those surveyed who consume content from Catholic news and commentary outlets have more unfavorable views of Muslims than those who don’t.

4 Catholics are less likely than the general American public to know a Muslim personally.

5 Catholics place more of the blame for poor Catholic-Muslim relations on Muslims, than on themselves.

6 Catholics who know a Muslim personally, or who have participated in dialogue or community service with Muslims, often have very different views about Islam and interfaith dialogue than those who haven’t interacted with Muslims.

7 A majority of Catholics correctly identify prayer and fasting important parts of Muslim life, but also incorrectly believe that Muslims worship Muhammad.



8 Catholics are split over whether Muslims have sufficiently condemned terrorism, and whether the prejudice faced by Muslims today resembles what Catholics experienced in earlier periods of American history.

9 One-third of Catholics believe Catholics and Muslims worship the same God and over half (55%) believe a Muslim can go to heaven.



TAKEAWAYS



In recent years, polling organizations have occasionally measured American Catholics' views of Muslims. A 2009 Pew poll found that only 19% of Catholics felt that Islam was similar to their religion (compared to 60% who saw Protestant Christianity as similar to Catholicism).¹ Pew has measured Catholics' views of Islam and violence,² and Gallup found in 2015 that a majority of Catholics would vote for a Muslim president.³ A June 2016 poll by the Public Religion Research Institute found that a majority of American Catholics believe the “values of Islam are at odds with American values and way of life” and that 52% of white Catholics favor a temporary ban on Muslim immigration to the United States.⁴

This data sheds important light on Catholics' views of Muslims, but leaves much more to uncover. In this chapter, we explore the following questions in depth: *How do American Catholics feel about Muslims and their religion? What do they know about Muslims' beliefs and practices? How often have Catholics interacted with Muslims, and how do they feel about interreligious dialogue more generally?* We were also interested in their secular and Catholic media consumption habits. How does Catholics' news intake impact their views about Muslims and their faith?

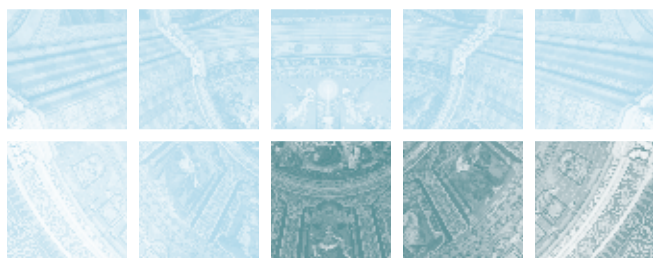
To answer these questions, we commissioned a nationwide survey of English-speaking, American Catholics. We worked with the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA),⁵ a non-profit polling organization affiliated with Georgetown University, to design the survey.

The poll was conducted from April 9, 2015 to April 14, 2015. It surveyed a nationally representative sample of English-speaking, U.S. Catholic adults, ages 18 and over. 1,027 individuals were polled. The survey was administered online by the GfK Group, a polling organization that uses probability-based sampling to recruit survey participants. (For more on GfK and the survey process, see our Methodology section on page 116.)

In this chapter, we present the views of American Catholics (as a whole) on a range of questions about Islam, Muslims, and interreligious dialogue. At certain points, we look at if and how knowing a Muslim personally — or participating in dialogue, social activism, or community service with Muslims in the past five years — impacts Catholics' views. At the end of the chapter, we look at how views differ between those who frequently consume particular Catholic publications, and those who prefer certain secular cable channels to others.

CATHOLICS' RELATIONSHIPS WITH MUSLIMS

NIn the United States, Muslims make up a small yet growing religious group. Numbering at least three million, they reside in cities and towns across the country.⁷ Three in ten Catholics report that they know a Muslim personally. 70% claim to not know any Muslims.



Only three in ten Catholics know a Muslim personally.

Lack of personal familiarity with Muslims is higher among Catholics than the general American population. On average, four in ten Americans say they know a Muslim.⁸ Discovering that Catholics are less likely than the general U.S. populace to know a Muslim personally was surprising to us. Given that Catholics are a large and diverse religious group, and that they often mirror the rest of the population in their political leanings,⁹ we expected that their personal familiarity with Muslims would have matched that of the general American population.

Catholics who know Muslims interact with them in a range of contexts. We asked respondents to tell us their relationship with the Muslim they know best. One third (32%) said the Muslim they know best is a “co-worker.” Another almost third say this Muslim acquaintance is a “friend” (30%). The Muslims that other Catholics know best are their neighbors (11%), family members (7%), and classmates (5%). 15% of Catholics met the Muslim they know best in another context.

7% of Catholics have Muslim family members.

“Our relationship with the followers of Islam has taken on great importance, since they are now significantly present in many traditionally Christian countries...”

POPE FRANCIS, *THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL*⁶



Since his election in 2013, Pope Francis has made interreligious dialogue and encounter a priority of his papacy. In *The Joy of the Gospel*, his first major piece of writing as pope, he acknowledged the presence of Muslims in Christian-majority countries, saying that Catholics' "relationship with followers of Islam has taken on great importance..."

Still, the vast majority of Catholics don't know Muslims, and even fewer have participated in dialogue or community service activities with Muslims. During the last five years, most Catholics have not engaged in interreligious dialogue, social activism, or community service activities in which Muslims also participated. Only 7% of Catholics report participating in dialogue or service with Muslims in recent years.



FEW CATHOLICS HAVE FAVORABLE VIEWS OF MUSLIMS

The final document that came out of the Second Vatican Council, which addressed the Church's relationship to "non-Christian religions," expressed that the Church "regards with esteem" or has "high regard for" Muslims. We wondered, how do American Catholics regard those who follow the religion of Islam?

When asked about their overall impression of Muslims, nearly one in three Catholics (30%) responded that they have either "very" or "somewhat unfavorable" views. 45% said they had "neither unfavorable or favorable" impressions of Muslims. Only 14% said they have "somewhat favorable" or "very favorable" views. A mere four percent said their views of Muslims were "very favorable." 11% of Catholics responded "don't know" to this question. (For more about our decision to offer respondents a "neither favorable nor unfavorable" option, and its implications, see page 116 in the methodology section.)

"The church has also a high regard for the Muslims..."

from "In Our Time," or Nostra Aetate, the Vatican II Declaration on Non-Christian Religions, released in 1965.

"What is your overall impression of Muslims?"

Favorable

14%

Neither favorable nor unfavorable

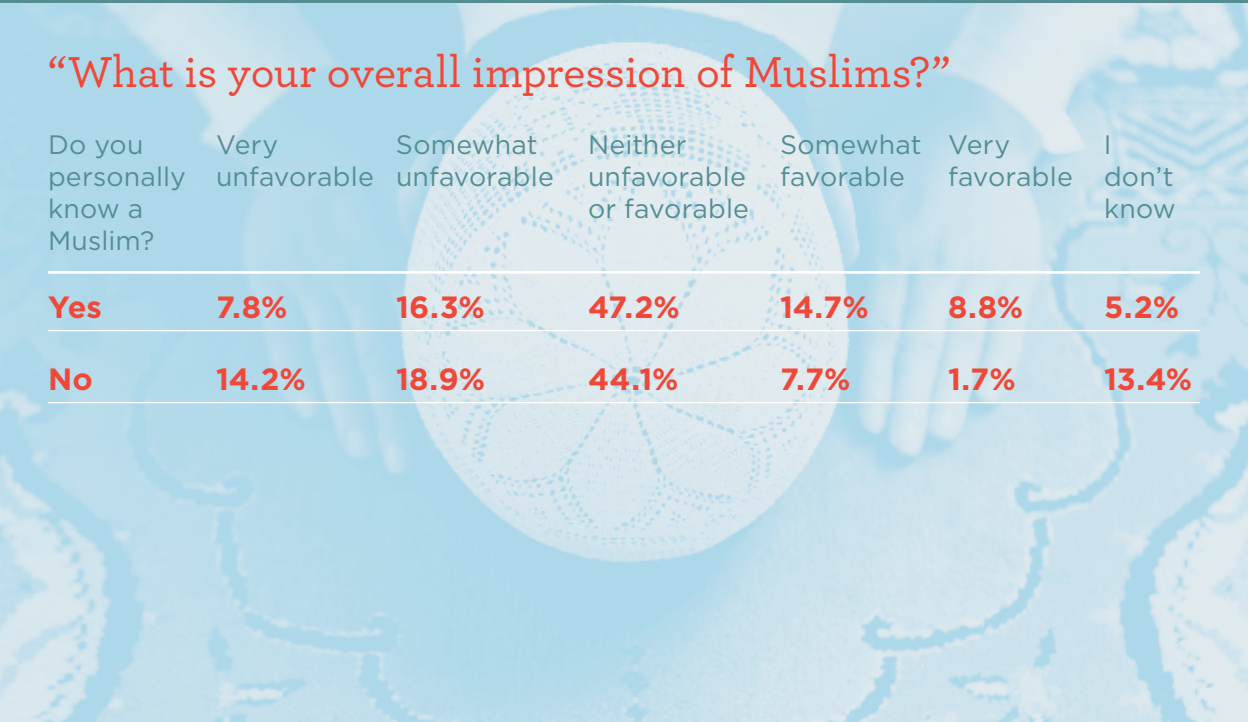
45%

Unfavorable

30%

Those who know Muslims have considerably more positive views of Muslims than those without Muslim acquaintances. Twice as many Catholics who do *not* know a Muslim personally reported having “very unfavorable” views of Muslims. And twice as many Catholics who *do* know a Muslim report having “somewhat favorable” views. Nearly four times as many Catholics who do know Muslims reported “very favorable” views, compared to those who don’t.

Catholics who know a Muslim personally have much more positive views of Muslims as a whole.



MANY CATHOLICS BELIEVE ISLAM ENCOURAGES VIOLENCE MORE THAN OTHER RELIGIONS

In Western media, Islam and Muslims usually appear in the context of violence and terrorism.¹⁰ As will be discussed in Chapter 2, Catholic media outlets often use words like “violence” and “attack” in headlines and Tweets about Islam and Muslims.

In recent years, pollsters have often asked Americans about their views on the relationship between Islam and violence, posing a question about whether or not Islam encourages violence more than other religions. In our Super Survey report, which was published in 2015, we found that in the last couple of years, a plurality of Americans has responded that Islam does encourage violence more than other religious traditions. Pew also asked this question of Catholics specifically in the late 2000s, finding that pluralities agreed Islam was more likely than other faiths to encourage violence.¹¹

In our survey, we asked Catholics: “Do you think the Islamic religion encourages violence more than other religions around the world, about the same amount, or less than other religions around the world?”



Nearly half of Catholics (45%) believe Islam “encourages violence *more* than other religions around the world.”

Nearly half of Catholics (45%) believe Islam “encourages violence *more* than other religions around the world.” A quarter (24%) said Islam encourages violence “the same amount” as other religions, and another quarter (28%) said they “don’t know.”

Catholics who know Muslims agree more that “the Islamic religion encourages violence the *same amount* as other religions” (33% v. 20%). However, both those who know Muslims (44%) and those who don’t (46%) respond *equally* that Islam encourages violence more than other religions around the world.

“Generally speaking, do you think the Islamic religion encourages violence more than other religions around the world, about the same amount, or less than other religions around the world?”

Do you personally know a Muslim?	More	Same	Less	I don't know
Yes	44%	33%	4%	19%
No	46%	20%	3%	32%

‘WHY DON’T MUSLIMS CONDEMN TERRORISM?’

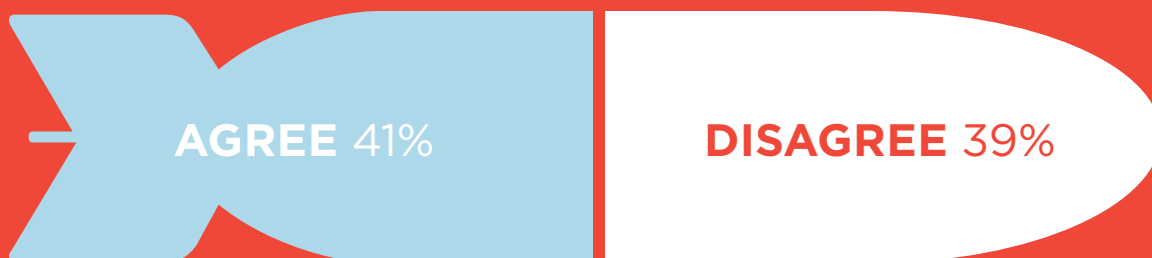
In the wake of violence committed by Muslims against non-Muslims, politicians and media commentators often call upon Muslim leaders to condemn the attacks.¹² Pope Francis, too, has echoed these calls for Muslim leaders to denounce terrorism committed by groups like ISIS.¹³ The question, “why don’t Muslims condemn terrorism?” became a constant refrain in the years following 9/11, with many Americans (including Catholics) posing the question to themselves and to others.

What many who posed this question failed to recognize was that Muslims indeed were speaking out against terrorism.¹⁴ Major statements were signed by Muslim leaders condemning groups like ISIS, and Muslims at the grassroots level were also taking steps to demonstrate that terrorist groups don’t represent them. Muslims around the

globe expressed frustration, however, that their condemnations were not being covered or paid attention to by the media. In the past few years, however, we have noticed anecdotally that mainstream American media organizations have made more of an effort to cover Muslims’ denunciations of ISIS and the violence they commit.

We asked if “Muslims have sufficiently condemned acts of terrorism committed in the name of Islam.” Catholics were split. 41% agreed that Muslims had sufficiently condemned terrorism, while 39% disagreed. Those who know Muslims responded more definitively. They were less likely to respond “don’t know,” and were more likely to disagree that Muslims have sufficiently condemned terrorism. We expected that Catholics who know Muslims would have been more aware of Muslims’ vocal condemnations of groups like ISIS.

“Muslims have sufficiently condemned acts of terrorism committed in the name of Islam.”



PLACING BLAME ON MUSLIMS FOR POOR INTERFAITH RELATIONS

The history of Catholic-Muslim relations has been marked by moments of violence and suspicion, and of collaboration and admiration. Since the earliest days of the formation of the Muslim community in the seventh century, Christians and Muslims have encountered one another not only on the battlefield, but also in their neighborhoods across the world. Muslims and Christians are the two largest religious groups in the world.¹⁶ There are two billion Christians globally, one half of whom are Catholic, and there are a billion and a half Muslims worldwide.¹⁷ Members of both religious groups live in virtually every country.



We were curious to learn how American Catholics (even those who might not have participated in dialogue with Muslims) viewed the role that they and Muslims play in the challenges that may arise in situations of Catholic-Muslim encounter. We asked Catholics to react to a number of realities, and to indicate how much of an obstacle these were to the development of better Catholic and Muslim relations today.

Catholics place more of the blame for poor Catholic-Muslim relations on Muslims, rather than on themselves.

Catholics more often identified Muslims' potential shortcomings or faults as major obstacles to good relations, than they mentioned Catholics' faults. Three-quarters (75%) of Catholics felt that violence and terrorism committed by Muslims was "very much" or "somewhat" of an obstacle to better relations. 63% felt that Muslims' lack of knowledge about Catholicism was a

considerable obstacle, and 59% felt this way about Muslims' attempts to impose their views on Catholics.

Slightly fewer numbers of Catholics felt that Catholics' lack of knowledge about Islam was "very much" or "somewhat" obstacle to improved relations (55%). The same number felt that U.S. foreign policy in Muslim majority countries abroad was a considerable obstacle.

"In your opinion, how much of an obstacle are each of the following to the development of better Catholic and Muslim relations today?"

Violence and terrorism committed by Muslims

75%



Muslims' lack of knowledge about Catholicism

63%



Muslims attempting to impose their views on Catholics

59%



Catholics' lack of knowledge about Islam

55%



US foreign policy in Muslim majority countries abroad

55%



Catholics attempting to impose their views on Muslims

36%



Those responding "very much" or "somewhat."

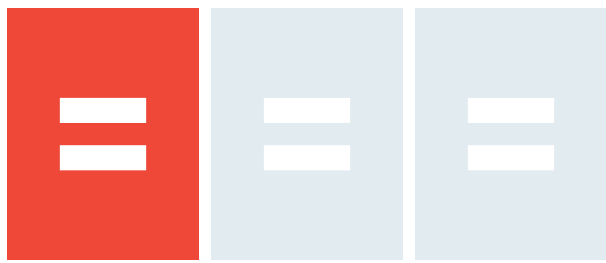
Catholics who have dialogued with Muslims are more likely than those who haven't to acknowledge how Catholics might have created obstacles to better Muslim-Christian relations. They are slightly more likely to acknowledge that Catholics' attempts to impose their views on Muslims would hamper relations, and they are considerably more likely to say that "Catholics' lack of knowledge about Islam" plays a role in inhibiting better relations.

‘DO WE HAVE THE SAME GOD?’ WILL I SEE YOU IN HEAVEN?’

ONE

One question that arises frequently in the context of Catholic-Muslim dialogue is whether or not both groups believe in the same God.

We asked Catholics what they thought. One-third (32%) agreed that “Catholics and Muslims believe in the same God.” 42% — a plurality — disagreed. A quarter said they “don’t know.”



One third of Catholics agree that Catholics and Muslims believe in the same God. A quarter are unsure, and 42% disagreed.

Those who know Muslims are more definitive in their views on this question; they both agree and disagree more with this statement than those who don't know Muslims — a third of whom responded “don't know” when asked about worshipping the same God. Only 10% of those who know Muslims were unsure.

A majority of Catholics who have participated in dialogue or community service with Muslims think that they and Muslims believe in the same God. They “strongly agree” with this statement five times more than Catholics who haven't participated in dialogue.

**“ We believe in the same God, the one God,
the living God, the God who created the world
and brings his creatures to their perfection...”**

POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II, IN AN ADDRESS TO
YOUNG MUSLIMS OF MOROCCO, AUGUST 1985/18



Another question that often arises among Muslims and Christians is that of salvation. Are non-Christians saved? Can they go to heaven? The Second Vatican Council gave what some would call an ambiguous answer in *Lumen Gentium*, the core theological document to emerge from the 1960s council: “The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind’s judge on the last day.”

We asked Catholics if they agreed that “it is possible for a Muslim to go to Heaven.” Over half of Catholics (55%) agreed, 11% disagreed, and a third (34%) said “don’t know.”

“The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims...”

From *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, published in 1964 out of the Vatican II Council. This is also quoted in section 841 in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.¹⁹

Over half of Catholics agree that “it is possible for a Muslim to go to Heaven.”

Two times more Catholics who know Muslims personally “strongly agree” that a Muslim can go to heaven. But a third of Catholics — regardless of having a relationship with a Muslim — said “don’t know.”

A vast majority (71%) of those who have participated in dialogue with Muslims agree that Muslims can be saved. More than half of those Catholics (47%) “strongly agree.”

ONE IN FIVE CATHOLICS THINK THEIR RELIGION AND ISLAM HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has identified religious beliefs and practices that Christians and Muslims have in common, among them belief in God who is the merciful creator, and practices like fasting and charitable giving.²¹

Curious what Catholics would name as the “strongest similarity between Catholicism and Islam,” we asked them this open-ended question. A quarter responded “don’t know.” Another fifth (21%) gave a very general answer: belief in a supreme being/higher power. Another fifth said that the two religions had *nothing* in common. 12% said that Catholics and Muslims have a common belief that there is only one God, while 4% said they believe in the “same God.” 2% said they were both “Abrahamic faiths.” Nearly half of Catholics can’t name any similarities between Catholicism and Islam, or say explicitly that there are no commonalities.

“Christians and Muslims have many things in common, as believers and as human beings...”

POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II, IN AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG MUSLIMS OF MOROCCO, AUGUST 1985²⁰

THIS WAS AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION.
SIMILAR RESPONSES HAVE BEEN GROUPED TOGETHER:

“In your view, what is the strongest similarity between Catholicism and Islam?”

Don't know

25%

Similarity	Percentage
Don't know	25%
“Belief in a supreme being/higher power”	21%
The two religions have no similarities	19%
“Belief that there is only one God”	12%
“Belief in the same God”	4%
“Both Abrahamic faiths”	2%

“Belief in a supreme being/higher power”

21%

The two religions have no similarities

19%

“Belief that there is only one God”

12%

“Belief in the same God”

4%

“Both Abrahamic faiths”

2%

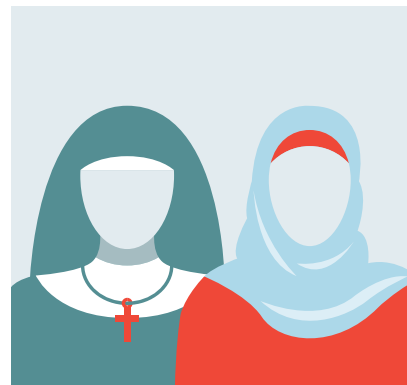
Nearly half of Catholics can't name any similarities between Catholicism and Islam, or say explicitly that there are no commonalities.

When asked whether or not “Catholics and Muslims share many common values,” 39% agreed and slightly fewer (25%) disagreed. A quarter were unsure. Two-thirds of those with Muslim acquaintances agreed that Catholics and Muslims share many common values.

HOT TOPICS: HEADSCARVES AND SHARIA

We asked Catholics about two topics related to Islam that often come up in American media. We asked about their views of the *hijab*, the headscarf worn by many Muslim women, and about their thoughts on *Sharia*.

When asked what the Islamic headscarf or *hijab* symbolizes most (“modesty,” “oppression,” or “acknowledging God’s presence,”) nearly two-thirds of Catholics (63%) said “modesty,” while 19% said “oppression.” We were surprised that such a majority of Catholics responded with the answer about modesty. Because this question has not been asked of other religious groups before, we can’t know if Catholics are more likely than other groups to respond this way. But perhaps it is Catholics’ acquaintance with habit-wearing nuns, or their personal conventions of modesty, that lead them to this conclusion about the meaning of wearing a headscarf.



“As you understand it, which of the following best describes what the female Islamic headscarf, the hijab, is symbolic of..”

Modesty

63%

Oppression

19%

Acknowledging God’s presence

10%

These three responses, along with “other” were offered to respondents.

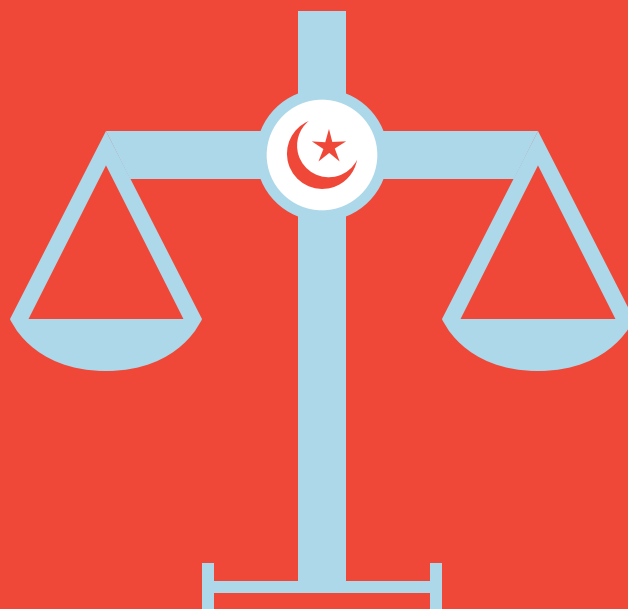
Those who know Muslims are more likely to say that the Islamic headscarf is symbolic of modesty than those who don't know Muslims (65.7% versus 57.9%). They're also slightly less likely to say it's symbolic of oppression.

Muslim women themselves report numerous reasons for choosing to wear the hijab, but modesty and acknowledging the presence of God are explanations many will give when asked. In the West, however, the headscarf has long been perceived as a sign of Muslim women's oppression by their religion or their male coreligionists.

In recent years, concerns about *Sharia* have surfaced in American media and political discourse. Activists and bloggers who run anti-Muslim groups drummed up fears that Muslims were intent on subverting the U.S. constitution, instituting Islamic supremacy, and enacting harsh punishments.²² As Bridge Initiative Director, John L. Esposito wrote

in the *Guardian*,²³ *Sharia* isn't a singular Islamic code of law, as these activists claim it is. Rather, it is understood by Muslims as God's will, and it has been interpreted in diverse ways. But fear of Islamic law in the United States became so great in the early 2010s that today, over two-dozen states have proposed or passed laws banning *Sharia* or "foreign law."²⁴

Given all this hype, we wanted to know what Catholics thought about *Sharia*. One in five (22%) agreed that they are "concerned that Islamic sharia law could eventually replace the American constitution." Half of Catholics disagreed, and one in five said "don't know." Catholics who know Muslims are a bit less fearful of *Sharia* than those who don't know Muslims.

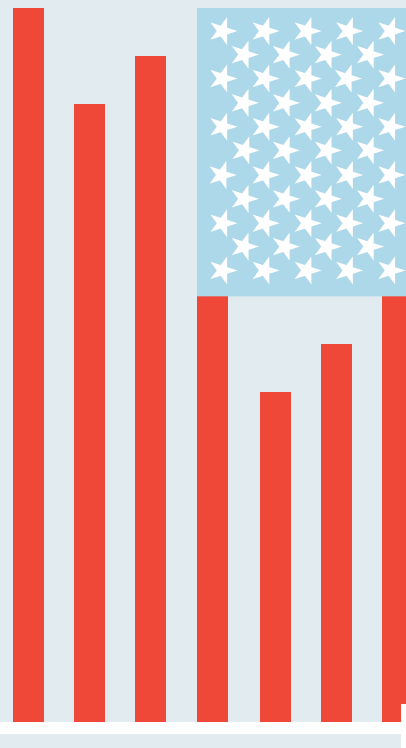


UNSURE ABOUT MUSLIMS AND AMERICAN VALUES

American pollsters have frequently asked the general American population, and Catholics specifically, about whether or not they think their Muslim compatriots share their values.²⁵ In late 2015, for example, one poll found that 56% of Americans found that “values of Islam are “at odds” with America’s values and way of life.”²⁶ In a June 2016 conducted by PRRI, a majority of American Catholics agreed with this.²⁷

We asked Catholics two questions about Muslims and American values. This is how they responded: Nearly one in three (31%) agreed that “most Muslims in America seek to impose their values on the rest of us,” but a plurality (43%) agreed that “most Muslims in the United States believe in American values.” One in five Catholics said they “don’t know.”

Those who know Muslims are far more likely to disagree that “most Muslims in America seek to impose their values on the rest of us” than those who don’t know Muslims. They were also far less likely to respond “don’t know.” Additionally, they were more likely to agree that “most Muslims in the US believe in American values” (51% versus 34.5%).



VIEWS ABOUT ISLAMOPHOBIA AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

About half of Catholics (52%) agree that “American Muslims today face prejudices similar to those American Catholics faced in the past.” Those who know Muslims or who have participated in dialogue with them agree with this more than those who haven’t dialogued or done community service with Muslims.

One in four Catholics (26%) agree that “the religious liberty of Muslims is endangered in America,” while a third (34%) of Catholics believe that “the religious liberty of Catholics is endangered.” Surprisingly, those who know Muslims or who have dialogued with them are less likely to believe that “the religious liberty of Muslims is endangered in America.” We expected that Catholics with Muslim acquaintances might be more attuned to the ways Muslims have felt infringements upon their religious liberties in recent years.



MANY CATHOLICS ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH SOME OF THE BASICS OF THE ISLAMIC FAITH

One of the things we were most interested to learn from this poll is what Catholics know about Muslims' faith. What do Catholics think Muslims believe?

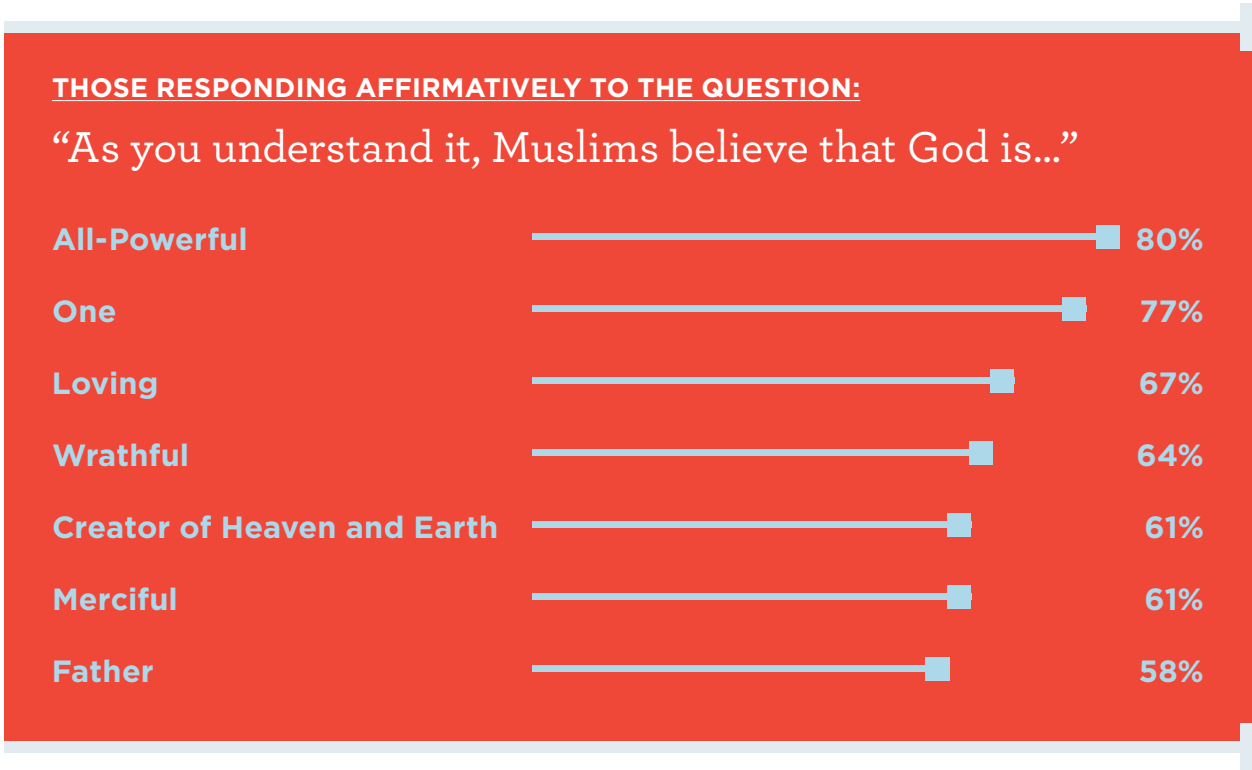
To formulate the survey questions, we turned to *Nostra Aetate*, the document of the Second Vatican Council which dedicates a paragraph to Muslims and their religion. The paragraph highlights a number of aspects of Islamic belief and practice that are nearly universal to the Muslim experience. We based our questions off of *Nostra Aetate* since it outlines what the Catholic Church states about what Muslims believe and practice.

It reads:

*“The church has also a high regard for the Muslims. They worship God, who is **one**, living and subsistent, **merciful** and **almighty**, the **Creator** of heaven and earth, who has also spoken to humanity. They endeavor to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God, just as **Abraham** submitted himself to God’s plan, to whose faith Muslims eagerly link their own. Although not acknowledging him as God, they venerate **Jesus** as a prophet; his **virgin Mother** they also honor, and even at times devoutly invoke. Further, they await the day of judgment and the reward of God following the resurrection of the dead. For this reason they highly esteem an upright life and worship God, especially by way of **prayer**, **alms-deeds** and **fasting**.”* (*Nostra Aetate* 3)²⁹

In our survey questions we incorporated the highlighted topics in the above paragraph. In addition to the aspects mentioned in *Nostra Aetate*, we tested Catholics' reactions to additional options, some of which are Christian ideas, and others of which are misconceptions about Islam.

Respondents were first asked about Muslims’ beliefs about God, and were provided with a list of characteristics of God, most of which were taken from Nostra Aetate. A majority of Catholics responded—correctly—that “one,” “merciful,” “all-powerful,” and “creator of heaven and earth” are traits Muslims ascribe to God. A majority (58%) also incorrectly answered that Muslims believe God is “father.” Unlike Christians, Muslims would not describe God as father.³⁰



Significantly more Catholics say Muslims believe in “one,” “all-powerful” God, than say Muslims believe God is “merciful.” Mercy is God’s primary attribute attested to by Muslims, who call on the “Most Compassionate and Most Merciful” in prayer³¹

In this question about God, we also included attributes like “loving” and “wrathful” — characteristics of God that are often brought up in American Christian contexts.³² More American Catholics agree that Muslims believe God is “loving” than agree that Muslims believe God is “wrathful.”

We then asked about other beliefs and practices: “As you understand it, which of the following are beliefs or practices of the Islamic religion?” We included options that are in fact aspects of Islam and are mentioned in *Nostra Aetate*: daily prayer, fasting, and almsgiving; reverence for Abraham; high regard for Jesus; and devotion to Mary. We also provided incorrect options: worship of Muhammad; belief in the Trinity; and belief in original sin.

A vast majority of Catholics correctly identified “daily prayer” (93%) and “fasting” (77%) as Islamic practices. A majority also correctly identified that belief in the Trinity and original sin are not held by Muslims.

Catholics were split over whether or not “reverence for Abraham” and “almsgiving/charitable giving” were important. In the Islamic tradition, Abraham is viewed as prophet, and Muslims are required to donate money to the poor and needy.

A vast majority of Catholics (86%) *incorrectly* thought that Muslims “worship Muhammad.” The prophet Muhammad is deeply honored by Muslims, who believe he communicated God’s revelation — the Qur’an — to humanity. Despite believing he was a perfect human, they do not believe he is divine and do not worship him.³³

Three-in-four Catholics (74%) did not think that Muslims have a “high regard for Jesus”—though they do—and nearly nine-in-ten (88%) didn’t think honoring Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a component of Islamic tradition. In fact, Muslims look to Mary, who they believe is the virgin mother of Jesus, as a holy figure. In many parts of the world, Muslims will visit shrines dedicated to Mary.

Given the portrayal of Muslims in the media, the results from these questions aren’t particularly surprising. Anecdotally, we can notice that Muslim prayer and fasting come up occasionally in news reports about Muslims, albeit in the context of terrorist attacks. So it is to be expected that Catholics would be most aware of these two aspects of Islam. Mainstream media coverage—where most Catholics get their information about Islam (see below)—rarely discusses Muslims’ theological ideas, other than the belief that God is “one.” While we might expect that Catholics are more aware of the importance of Jesus, Mary, and Abraham in the Islamic tradition (since they are also figures in Christianity), it is not entirely surprising, given many Catholics’ lack of relationships with Muslims, and that media coverage of Muslims primarily focuses on violence, rather than ordinary religious belief and practice.

Most American Catholics seem self-aware about their ignorance of Islam. Only one in ten Catholics say they “know a lot about Islam.” A third of Catholics (32%) “want to know more” about the religion. But half (52%) of Catholics don’t want to learn more about Islam. Those who already know Muslims or who have participated in dialogue are more eager to learn about Islam than those who don’t know Muslims.



Depiction of Jesus and Mary from the Islamic tradition.

Our survey also found that knowing Muslims personally usually correlates with having more knowledge of Muslims’ beliefs and practices (belief in one God, who is merciful, all-powerful, and the creator; rejection of Trinitarian theology and original sin; reverence for Abraham; almsgiving, prayer, and fasting). But those who know Muslims were slightly more likely than others Catholics to incorrectly think that Muslims view God as “Father” and that Muslims worship the prophet Muhammad. Knowing Muslims also has no effect on Catholics’ understanding of Muslims’ views of Jesus. And it has a negative effect on their perceptions of Muslims’ reverence toward Jesus’ mother, Mary. Those who know Muslims, and those who have participated in dialogue or community service with Muslims, are more likely to say that Muslims believe God is “loving” (by 10 and 20 percentage points, respectively.)

WHERE CATHOLICS GET THEIR INFORMATION ABOUT ISLAM

We also wanted to ask Catholics how they consume information about Islam. 85% have “not read any books about Islam since 9/11,” and 6% say they have. 9% can’t recall. Those who know Muslims are more likely to have read a book about Islam in the last fifteen years (14%) than those who don’t know a Muslim (3%).

We also gave respondents a list of prominent authors who have written about Islam. Some of them have written about Islam for a Catholic audience; others have a broader audience. Some are Muslim; most are not. This list included John Esposito, director of the Bridge Initiative and a Georgetown University professor on Islam; Robert Spencer, a Catholic who runs a website called Jihad Watch and an “anti-Islamization” group with Pamela Geller; Sandra Toenis Keating, a Catholic professor who has written guides on Islam for Catholics; Karen Armstrong, a historian of religion; Ayaan Hirsi Ali, an activist who writes about her experience leaving Islam; Reza Aslan, a Muslim professor who writes about Islam for a lay audience; George Dardess, a Catholic who writes about dialogue with Muslims; and George Weigel, a Catholic political commentator and activist. The vast majority of Catholics were unfamiliar with all of these authors. Weigel, a Catholic, was the most familiar to American Catholics. That being said, only 3% said they were aware of him.

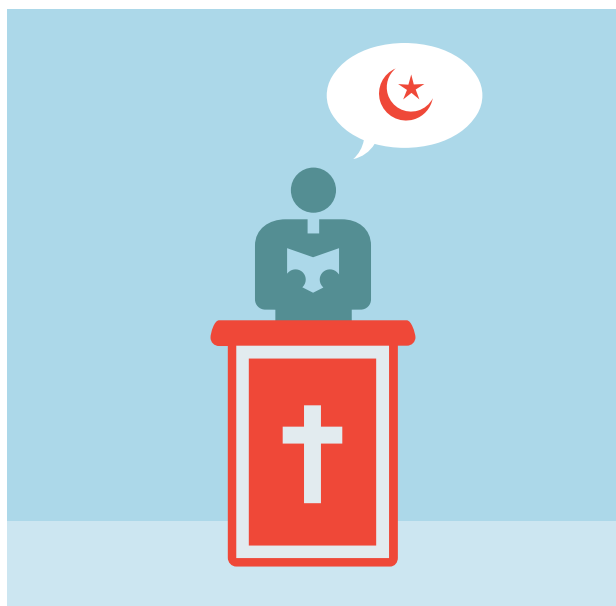
To respondents who were familiar with a particular author, we asked how reliable an authority on Islam they believed him/her to be. Among those that were familiar with them, Reza Aslan and Ayaan Hirsi Ali had the most respondents agree that they were “reliable authorities on Islam and Muslims.”

We asked respondents who had read a book on Islam to share the titles or the authors of the books they read.

Here are some of the responses they wrote in: *The Qur’an*; *Because They Hate*, by Brigitte Gabriel; *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini; *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam* by Robert Spencer; and *What Catholics Should Know about Islam*, by Sandra Toenis Keating. Several respondents also listed books about Muslim women.

When asked where they have received most of their knowledge about Islam and Muslims, only 5% responded “resources which address the topic specifically,” like a book or article which focuses on the religion in depth. 63% said they received most of their knowledge on Islam “news outlets which reference the topic generally,” like news segments which discuss events in the Middle East. 31% said “both equally.”

It was also of interest to ask respondents how Islam had come up in a Catholic context — in homilies, their diocesan newspaper, and parish events. 8% of Catholics recalled that in the past 12 months, their “pastor discussed Islam and Muslims in his homily or remarks.” 6% said a topic about Islam and Muslims had appeared in their diocesan newspaper. Only 2% said their “parish has hosted an event related to Islam and Muslims in the last five years.”



Of the 9% who said Islam had been discussed by priests in homilies, 59% said that they “tried to present a neutral impression of Islam,” while 30% said an attempt was made to give a “favorable impression” of the religion. Only 11% said the priest tried to present a “negative impression of Islam.”

FOR MANY CATHOLICS, DIALOGUE IS ABOUT GROWING CLOSER TO GOD

In addition to gaining insight into Catholics' views of Islam specifically, we wanted to know what they believe is the purpose of interreligious dialogue.

The Vatican and other Catholics throughout history have articulated their reasons why Catholics are called to participate in interreligious dialogue. The Church has communicated the importance of dialogue in bringing religious people together to engage in peacebuilding and to work for justice. The Church has emphasized that dialogue and proclamation — which is “an invitation to a commitment of faith in Jesus Christ” — are together part of the Church’s “evangelizing mission.”³⁴ Pope Francis has talked about how dialogue can shed light on “shared beliefs” between Christians and Muslims.³⁵ Fr. Christian de Cherge, a Catholic monk who lived among Muslims in Algeria before

being murdered in 1996, wrote about how dialogue with Muslims was about growing closer to God.³⁶

Respondents were asked to react to several possible purposes for interreligious dialogue. For each, they responded with one of the following: very much, somewhat, a little, or not at all. Nearly half (47%) said “learning about and growing closer to God” was “very much” the purpose of dialogue. 41% also responded that “building relationships to work for peace and justice” was “very much” a reason for dialogue. Only 28% responded that that “bringing others to a faith in Christ” was “very much” the purpose of dialogue, and 23% replied “very much” when asked about “learning about others’ religions, and identifying similarities and differences with one’s own.”

CATHOLICS RESPONDING “VERY MUCH” WHEN ASKED:

“How much does each of the following reflect what you believe to be the purpose of interreligious dialogue?”



We were surprised that three-quarters (76%) of Catholics responded that learning about and growing closer to God as “very much” or “somewhat” the purpose of dialogue, because the Church hasn’t explicitly framed interreligious dialogue in this way in its main documents on dialogue.

We looked at how knowing a Muslim personally or participating in dialogue or community service activities with Muslims might affect Catholics’ beliefs about interreligious dialogue. Simply knowing a Muslim does not have an impact on one’s beliefs about whether or not the purpose of dialogue is to bring others to a faith in Jesus Christ. But those who have participated in dialogue or community service with Muslims are nearly twice as likely than those who haven’t to say that bringing others to the Christian faith is “not at all” a purpose of dialogue.

Those who know Muslims personally or have participated in dialogue are more likely to agree that learning about others’ religions and working for peace and justice are “very much” purposes of interreligious dialogue.

Two-thirds (69%) of Catholics agree that “I can learn something about God from other religions.” 13% disagree. Those who know a Muslim personally are nearly twice as likely as others to “strongly agree” with this statement. Those who have participated in dialogue with Muslims (49%) are three times more likely to “strongly agree” with this statement than those who haven’t (16%).

83% of Catholics said that “bringing others to a faith in Jesus Christ” is at least part of the purpose engage in dialogue. 17% said this is “not at all” a purpose for dialogue.

These responses provide a glimpse into how Catholics — most of whom have not engaged in dialogue before — might approach dialogue with Muslims. A future survey could shed more light on Catholics’ attitudes about interreligious dialogue.

CATHOLICS ARE LARGELY UNAWARE OF CHURCH TEACHING ON ISLAM AND DIALOGUE

In the poll, we also found that Catholics are largely unaware of *Nostra Aetate*, the document on interreligious dialogue that emerged out of Vatican II, and the Church's teaching on Islam more generally.

Nine in 10 Catholics have never heard of *Nostra Aetate*, the document of the Second Vatican Council on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. A third of those who had heard of the document couldn't identify what it was about.

When asked, "to what extent does the Catholic Church's teaching about Islam shape your own views about Muslims and their religion," two thirds responded "not at all." 22% said "a little" and 11% said either "very much" or "somewhat." Those who have participated in dialogue with Muslims (27%) were more likely than those who hadn't (9%) to say that the Church's teaching on Islam "somewhat" shapes their views about Muslims and their religion.

We also put this question about Church teaching on Islam another way, and most Catholics acknowledged that they don't "know what the Catholic Church teaches about Islam." Only 16% agreed that they know the Church's teaching.



CATHOLICS WHO CONSUME CATHOLIC MEDIA HAVE MORE NEGATIVE VIEWS OF MUSLIMS THAN THOSE WHO DON'T

In the survey, we also inquired about Catholics' media consumption. We were interested to know if those who frequently consume American Catholic media have different views of Muslims and Islam than those who don't.

It is important to first note that the vast majority of Catholics do *not* frequently consume Catholic media, whether they are online and print publications, or Catholic TV and radio programs. This is a finding from previous polls conducted by CARA³⁷ and something we also found when we asked respondents whether they “frequently consume content” from several American Catholic print, online, radio and television outlets. The vast majority of Catholics do not consume Catholic media frequently. (To read more about how we chose the particular Catholic outlets to include in the survey, see our methodology on page 116).

The survey revealed that Catholics who frequently consume media from Catholic outlets have, on average, more unfavorable views of Muslims than those who don't. (To read more about our methodology, see page 116.) On the left, we break down the views of those who consume specific Catholic outlets.

The outlet with the highest percentage of consumers with favorable view of Muslims was *America*. 50% of respondents said they had a “favorable” overall impression of Muslims. The outlets that had the highest percentage of frequent readers reporting unfavorable views in our survey were *Crisis Magazine* and *The Catholic World Report*. It should be noted, that due to the very small numbers of Catholics who reported frequently reading these outlets, these percentages by outlet may have limited generalizability. They do, however point to an interesting pattern that warrants further exploration in the future.

Aside from their diocesan newspapers, which 14% of Catholics read frequently, the catholic outlet consumed most by Catholics is the Eternal World Television Network (EWTN), which 8% of Catholics frequently watch.

Frequent Catholic Media Consumers' Views of Muslims

Frequent Consumers of...	Unfavorable	Neither Favorable Nor Unfavorable	Favorable	
America	25	25	50	Magazines and print publications
American Catholic	50	27.8	16.7	
National Catholic Register	45.8	29.2	16.7	
National Catholic Reporter	36.8	36.8	15.8	
Our Sunday Visitor	48.9	37.2	4.7	
Diocesan Newspaper	47.1	37	12.3	
Commonweal	0	100	0	
US Catholic	35.1	37.8	24.3	
NONE OF THESE	27.6	46.6	12.9	
Catholic Culture	25	50	0	Online Publications
Catholic News Service	45.5	36.4	13.6	
Catholic News Agency	41.6	41.7	16.7	
Catholic Answers	36	36	28	
New Advent	25	75	0	
Crisis Magazine	100	0	0	
The Catholic World Report	68.8	6.3	12.5	
Busted Halo	50	33.3	16.7	
Catholic.org	45.4	45	24.2	
Patheos Catholic Blogs	66.7	33	0	Catholic TV and radio
NONE OF THESE	28.8	46.6	14.3	
EWTN	50.7	31.2	11.7	
Catholic TV	34.1	50	6.8	
Relevant Radio	41.2	41.2	11.8	
Sirius XM: The Catholic Channel	61.6	30.8	0	
Ave Maria Radio	45	35	10	
"Daily Vortex" on Church Militant TV	50	0	50	
NONE OF THESE	28	45.8	14.4	

Percent responding

The survey also revealed interesting findings about Catholic media consumers' views on Islam and violence. We found those who read Catholic outlets, on average, are more likely to believe that "Islam encourages violence more than other religions" than those who don't frequently consume Catholic outlets. Below is the breakdown by outlet.

Of all the Catholic outlets, *Crisis Magazine* and the Catholic blogs at Patheos.com had the highest percentage of readers who said

that Islam encourages violence more. The outlet that had the highest percentage of readers responding that Islam encourages violence *the same* as other religions was *National Catholic Reporter*. (For more on the relationships between views and outlets consumed, see page 116). As stated above, these breakdowns by outlet are not widely generalizable, due to the very small number of respondents who read these outlets.. But these findings from our survey's respondents are worth exploring further in other surveys.

Catholic Media Consumers' Answer to This Question: Does Islam encourage violence more, less, or the same as other religions?

Frequent Consumers of...	More	Same	Less	Don't Know
<i>America</i>	25	25	0	50
<i>American Catholic</i>	57.9	26.3	5.3	10.5
<i>National Catholic Register</i>	58.3	16.7	0	25
<i>National Catholic Reporter</i>	36.8	57.9	0	5.3
<i>Our Sunday Visitor</i>	57.1	9.5	2.4	31
<i>Diocesan Newspaper</i>	66.4	15.3	2.9	15.3
<i>Commonweal</i>	0	100	0	0
<i>US Catholic</i>	37.8	24.3	16.2	21.6
NONE OF THESE	42.8	23.7	3	28.1
<i>Catholic Culture</i>	33.3	8.3	0	58.3
<i>Catholic News Service</i>	54.5	22.7	0	22.7
<i>Catholic News Agency</i>	61.5	23.1	0	15.4
<i>Catholic Answers</i>	44	20	12	24
<i>New Advent</i>	50	50	0	0
<i>Crisis Magazine</i>	100	0	0	0
<i>The Catholic World Report</i>	50	31.3	6.3	12.5
<i>Busted Halo</i>	60	40	0	0
Catholic.org	60.6	24.2	3	12.1
Patheos Catholic Blogs	100	0	0	0
None of these	44.4	24.3	2.6	28.7
<i>EWTN</i>	64.1	14.1	2.6	19.2
<i>Catholic TV</i>	54.5	9.1	6.8	29.5
<i>Relevant Radio</i>	47.1	35.3	17.6	0
<i>Sirius XM: The Catholic Channel</i>	84.6	7.7	0	0
<i>Ave Maria Radio</i>	70	5	5	20
Daily Vortex on Church Militant TV	50	50	0	0
None of these	43.4	25.3	2.4	28.9

Percent responding

CATHOLICS WHO WATCH FOX HAVE LESS FAVORABLE VIEWS OF MUSLIMS, AND SEE ISLAM AS MORE VIOLENT

We also looked at how Catholics’ secular media preferences are related to their impressions of Muslims and views on Islam and violence. We asked respondents which three of the cable news channels they would prefer: Fox News, CNN, or MSNBC.

Catholics who prefer Fox News have more unfavorable views than those who prefer CNN and MSNBC. They also have more “very” unfavorable views. About one quarter of Catholics who choose CNN or MSNBC

have unfavorable views, versus 39% of those preferring Fox. Those who like MSNBC have the most favorable views of Muslims. Fox fans also say “Islam encourages violence more than other religions” more than CNN or MSNBC fans. Half of those preferring Fox say this. Those who prefer CNN and MSNBC are say “Islam encourages violence the same as other religions” two times more than Fox viewers. (For more on this relationship, see page 116).

Views of Muslims by Preferred Cable News Channel

Those Who Prefer...	Unfavorable	Neither Favorable Nor Unfavorable	Favorable
Fox	38.6	41.1	9.5
CNN	25.2	50.3	13.1
MSNBC	24.6	42.4	22.5

Catholic Media Consumers’ Answer to This Question: Does Islam encourage violence more, less, or the same as other religions?

Those Who Prefer...	More	Same	Less	Don’t Know
Fox	53.5	15.8	2.8	28
CNN	41.8	28.2	2.5	27.5
MSNBC	37.9	29.5	4.2	28.4

Percent responding

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have shed new light on American Catholics' views about Islam, Muslims, and interreligious dialogue. From our survey, we found that knowing a Muslim personally — or participating in dialogue, social activism, or community service with Muslims — can often impact Catholics' views in major ways.

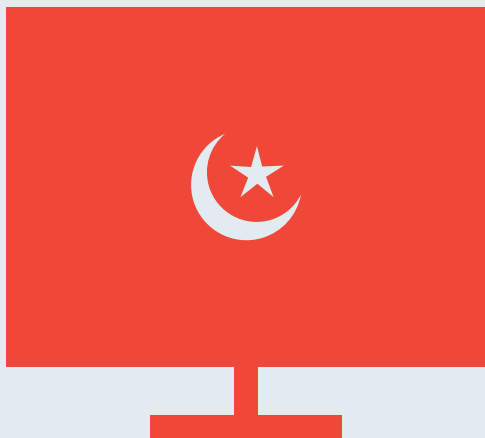
We've also seen how those who consume Catholic media have more unfavorable views of Muslims, and are more likely to see Islam as more violent than other religions. We have also learned that most Catholics don't look to the Church for their views on Islam, but rather get most of their information about the religion from references in the news.

These findings open up new questions that could be explored in future surveys, particularly the relationship between Catholic media consumption and views on Islam. More research can and should be done to expand on our polls' findings about American Catholic views on Islam, Muslims and interreligious dialogue.





Framed by Pope Francis: How Catholic Outlets Portray Islam





CHAPTER 2 TAKEAWAYS

1 From October 2014 to September 2015, **nearly 800** articles referencing Islam or Muslims appeared on major American Catholic websites.

2 In prominent Catholic outlets, half of the time the word “Islamic” is used, it is in reference to the Islamic State terrorist group.



3 The headlines of Catholic articles dealing with Islam have a **negative sentiment overall**, and the primary emotion conveyed in these headlines is **anger**. Of the online Catholic outlets examined, *Catholic Answers* and *Catholic Culture* had the most negative sentiment in their titles related to Islam. Only one outlet had positive headlines about Islam: *American Catholic*.

4 Often, **the words, gestures, and activities of Pope Francis** accompany Catholic outlet’s discussion of Islam in articles.

5 Mentioning Pope Francis often, or not at all, seems to impact the sentiment conveyed in headlines about Islam. The outlets with the **most negative sentiment** in their headlines about Islam were also those that **mention Pope Francis the least**, and the outlet with the most positive sentiment mentioned Pope Francis the most.



TAKEAWAYS



A key concern of this report is how American Catholic publications portray and discuss Islam. Instead of focusing on statements from the Vatican and Church institutions, we wanted to explore the content that comes from the dozens of publishing companies and media outlets that aim to serve American Catholics. Whether they're perceived as more "traditional" or more "liberal," these outlets understand their missions as an outgrowth of the Catholic faith, and intend to shape Catholics' knowledge by providing information that matches the spirit and letter of Catholic teaching.

News and commentary outlets that produce content for an American Catholic audience bring up Islam frequently. So do American Catholic publishing companies, which sell books, audio programs, and videos that reference Islam and Muslims

In this chapter, we explore the portrayal of Muslims and their faith in popular Catholic news and commentary outlets online.¹ In the following chapter, we look at materials on Islam sold by Catholic publishing companies.

We wanted to examine online Catholic outlets that have the highest readership,

but that also span the spectrum of "liberal" and "conservative" Catholic outlets. On page 117, you can read our methodology and justifications for selecting the outlets to be included. The nine online outlets that we settled on were *America*, *American Catholic*, *Catholic Answers*, *Catholic Culture*, *Catholic News Agency*, *Catholic News Service*, *National Catholic Reporter*, *National Catholic Register*, and *Our Sunday Visitor*.

We looked at the content related to Islam that was published on these nine outlets' websites over a year-long period. The timeframe — from October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015 — overlapped with the date of our poll mentioned in Chapter 1, which was conducted in April 2015. We collected content published during this timeframe that contained "Islam," "Islamic," "Muslim," or "Muslims" somewhere in the body of the text. For additional details about our process for gathering articles from these sites, see page 117.

The content that resulted from this process was a mix of original news articles, blog posts, articles reprinted from religion newswires, and other posts that reference Islam or Muslims that were published on these outlets' websites from fall 2014 to fall 2015.

THE BIG PICTURE: CATHOLIC OUTLETS' ARTICLES ON ISLAM

From October 2014 to September 2015, these nine Catholic outlets published 779 online pieces that referenced Islam or Muslims

Over a year period, prominent Catholic outlets published nearly 800 pieces that referenced Islam or Muslims online.

Some outlets published far more pieces than others during this year period. *Catholic News Agency* and *National Catholic Reporter* published nearly 200 each that touched on Islam or Muslims. *American Catholic* published only four.

Number of articles on Islam by outlet
PUBLISHED ONLINE BETWEEN OCTOBER 1, 2014 AND SEPTEMBER 30, 2015.

<i>Catholic News Agency</i> 198	<i>National Catholic Reporter</i> 189
<i>National Catholic Register</i> 144	<i>Catholic Culture</i> 33
	<i>Our Sunday Visitor</i> 33
	<i>Catholic Answers</i> 23
<i>America</i> 132	<i>Catholic News Service</i> 23
	<i>American Catholic</i> 4

IN HEADLINES, POPE FRANCIS FRAMES ISLAM

To gain insight into how Islam and Muslims are discussed in the outlets, we looked at what words were most commonly used in headlines across all the outlets. (To read our methodology, see page 118.) This is what we found:

Top Ten Words Used in Headlines of Articles Discussing Islam and Muslims

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. Pope | 6. Church |
| 2. Francis | 7. New |
| 3. Religious | 8. Refugees |
| 4. Peace | 9. Visit |
| 5. Bishop | 10. Faith, Attack |

The pope — more specifically, Pope Francis — is the most common recurring reference in headlines of Catholic articles that talk about Islam. This might not be surprising to some, since these are outlets that report on Catholic affairs, but it is telling. Pope Francis does not simply appear in the body of an article that is otherwise about Islam or Catholic-Muslim dialogue or the Middle East.

Rather, the pontiff is mentioned frequently in headlines, as the center of the story. Thus, the pope's words, gestures, and activities — like his “visits” to various countries — are often the frame or vehicle through which Catholics consume information about Islam. Pope Francis is known for his outreach to Muslims both in Rome and around the world, and Catholic outlets covered these activities often.

Pope Francis' words, gestures, and activities are often the frame through which Catholics consume information about Islam.

Bishops, who have made public statements about Islam covered by Catholic outlets,² also appeared in our top ten. The words “peace,” “refugees,” and “attack” also came up frequently, something that didn't surprise us given the window of our study, which was amid the rise of ISIS and the Syrian refugee crisis.

HEADLINES MENTIONING POPE FRANCIS

In major American Catholic outlets



Pope Francis Turkey Voyage
One of Peace and Reconciliation
(*National Catholic Register*)

Don't use religion as a weapon of war, Pope
Francis insists (*Catholic News Agency*)

Pope says Year of Mercy will be time to heal,
help, forgive (*American Catholic*)

Pope meets leaders of Yezidi community facing Islamic State
persecution (*Catholic News Service*)

Pope Francis offers Mass for victims of attack at Paris
satirical newspaper (*National Catholic Register*)

Why does Pope Francis back liberal causes directly
conservative causes subtly? (*Catholic Culture*)



Pope Francis greets
families who lost loved
ones in 9/11
(*Our Sunday Visitor*)



A Bonus from Pope
Francis: Praying with
People of Other Faiths
(*America*)

Pope Francis appears in the headlines of articles about Islam in all but one of the outlets. *Catholic Answers* does not mention the pontiff in its headlines. The outlet that mentions Pope Francis most often, relative to the number of pieces published online about Islam, was *American Catholic*. (For the methodology used, see page 118.)

IN CATHOLIC TWITTERSPHERE, DIALOGUE AND VIOLENCE COME UP OFTEN WITH ISLAM

In addition to looking at headlines, we also dug into Tweets to see the context in which Islam and Muslims come up on social media. More and more Americans — including Catholics — use social media to consume information,³ so we were interested in how Catholic outlets frame Islam and Muslims.

We compiled Tweets containing “Islam” or “Muslim” shared by the nine outlets during our determined timeframe: October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015. For more on the methodology, see page 118.)

The top ten words and hashtags used in these Tweets were: dialogue, violence, #PopeFrancis, pope, condemn, religious, attack, news, cardinal and hope. Here’s what that looks like in a word cloud, where the words appear larger the more often they were used:

Top Ten Words
Used By
Catholic Outlets
When Talking
about Islam

A word cloud on a teal background. The words are arranged in a vertical orientation. The largest word is 'dialogue'. Other large words include '#popefrancis', 'violence', 'pope', 'religious', 'condemn', 'attack', 'news', 'cardinal', and 'hope'.

In the Tweets we examined, Islam comes up alongside words like “dialogue” and “hope,” but also words like “violence” and “attack.” The word “condemn” also comes up near the top, indicating that the Tweets are likely about Catholic religious leaders condemning ISIS or calling upon Muslim leaders to do so, something we observed anecdotally. Just as in headlines, Pope Francis comes up frequently.

WHICH OUTLET MENTIONS ISIS MOST?

In addition to looking at how the entire group of Catholic outlets talk about Muslims and their faith, we wanted to compare across outlets, and see how they treated different topics related to Islam. We asked, *how did Islam and Muslims come up in relation to topics and buzzwords we've noticed anecdotally in both Catholic and secular media? Topics like violence and terrorism, interreligious dialogue, persecution of Christians, and Islamophobia?* We wanted to know if particular outlets mentioned these topics, or used certain words — like “justice,” “mercy,” and “war” — more than others in their pieces about Islam.

We looked at the following topics in the body of articles published by each outlet:

- The Islamic State
- Persecution of Christians
- Interfaith activities and Muslim-Christian dialogue
- Anti-Muslim prejudice and discrimination, or Islamophobia
- Violence committed by Muslims in general
- Islam and politics
- Evangelization

We also tracked single words in the different outlets: “dialogue,” “mercy/merciful,” “peace,” “justice,” “war” and “Nostra Aetate” — the title of the Vatican II document about the Church’s relationship with other religions. Our justification for choosing these topics and words, and our methodology for identifying them in each outlets’ articles is explained on pages 118 and 119.

Once we determined how often each topic or word was referenced in each outlet's content, we compared these references across all the outlets. For each topic or word, we divided the total number of references by the number of articles published by each outlet. Comparing these resulting ratios allowed us to account for the outlet's varied rates of publishing articles, and to see how often a topic came up in one outlet relative to the others. (For more detail on the methodology, see page 120.)

Below we list the top two outlets that referenced each theme or word most often, relative to the total number of articles they published:

- **Islamic State:**
America, National Catholic Register
- **Christian persecution:**
Our Sunday Visitor, Catholic News Agency
- **Interfaith activities:**
America, American Catholic
- **Islamophobia:**
America, National Catholic Reporter
- **Violence committed by Muslims:**
Catholic Culture, National Catholic Register
- **Islam and politics:**
Catholic News Service, National Catholic Register
- **Evangelization:**
Catholic Answers, American Catholic
- **"Dialogue":**
National Catholic Reporter, Catholic News Agency
- **"Mercy/Merciful":**
American Catholic, Catholic Culture
- **"Peace":**
America, Catholic News Agency
- **"War":**
America, National Catholic Reporter
- **"Nostra Aetate":**
Our Sunday Visitor, America

This is the breakdown by outlet:

- **America** referenced the following topics more than any other outlet: the **Islamic State**, **interfaith** activities, **Islamophobia**, the word "**peace**," and the word "**war**."
- **Catholic Answers** was the outlet that most often referenced **violence committed by Muslims**, relative to the other outlets. It was also the outlet to most often bring up **evangelization**. This second finding was not surprising to us, given Catholic Answers' focus on apologetics.
- **Catholic News Service** was the outlet most likely to bring up the topic of **Islam** and **politics**.
- **National Catholic Reporter** was the outlet to most frequently use the word "**dialogue**" in its articles about Islam and Muslims.
- **Our Sunday Visitor** was the outlet to most frequently bring up **anti-Christian persecution** and to reference the document "**Nostra Aetate**."
- **American Catholic** was the outlet that most often brought up "**mercy**" and "**justice**."
- Neither **Catholic Culture**, **Catholic News Agency**, nor **National Catholic Register** mentioned any of these topics most often. But Catholic News Agency and National Catholic Register often had the second highest rates of referencing these topics and words.

Though these findings tell us little about how these topics come up in these outlets, but they do give us important insights into how Catholic outlets compare in the frequency in the coverage of these topics. We hope these findings, which are elaborated on in Appendix B will be helpful to Catholic outlets themselves, providing them an understanding of how their coverage of Islam compares to that of other outlets.

HALF OF THE PHRASES THAT USES THE ADJECTIVE “ISLAMIC” ARE ABOUT THE “ISLAMIC STATE”

In examining the article text, we also looked at how often phrases including the adjective “Islamic” made mention of the Islamic State group. Across the text of the articles in all nine outlets, half (52%) of the references to something “Islamic” were about the “Islamic State.” When we broke it down by outlet, we found that among *Catholic News Agency’s* uses of the word “Islamic,” 65% of them were about the “Islamic State.” That outlet, followed by *National Catholic Reporter* (62%), had the highest rate of referencing ISIS in phrases that used the adjective “Islamic.”

Half (52%) of the time the word “Islamic” was used, it was in reference to the Islamic State terrorist group.



These findings may help explain Catholics’ views of Muslims, and their views of Islam and violence, which we elaborated on in Chapter 1. The prevalent mention of the brutal terrorist group, ISIS, could play a role in why many Catholics — particularly those

who frequently read Catholic media outlets — have unfavorable views of Muslims and see Islam as more violent than other religions.

IBM'S SENTIMENT ANALYZER FOUND NEGATIVITY — AND LOTS OF ANGER — IN HEADLINES

Lastly, we wanted to look at the sentiment and emotion conveyed in the Catholic outlets' content on Islam. *Was the sentiment in the headlines of articles on Islam positive or negative? What was the primary emotion conveyed in the headlines — joy, sadness, fear, anger or disgust?*

We first answered these questions about the online content as a whole, and then looked at each outlet individually, using IBM's online sentiment analyzer. (See methodology on page 121). In headlines of Catholic content on Islam from the nine different outlets, we found that the overall sentiment was slightly negative, and the primary emotion conveyed was anger.

The headlines of Catholic online articles dealing with Islam have a slightly negative overall sentiment, and the primary emotion conveyed is anger.

Twice as much anger was conveyed than fear, and joy, disgust, and sadness — the other three emotions that a computer can read — lagged far behind anger and fear.

We then examined the sentiment conveyed by each outlet. All of the Catholic outlets, but one, had negative sentiment in their headlines. *American Catholic* was the only outlet with a positive sentiment score.

All of the outlets, but one, have negative sentiment in their headlines on Islam. The majority of the outlets also have anger as the primary emotion in their headlines.

Anger was the primary emotion conveyed in the headlines of a majority of the outlets. Fear was the primary emotion of two outlets, and joy was the primary emotion for *American Catholic*, which also had the only positive sentiment score. Disgust was a common secondary emotion for outlets' headlines. Sadness did not emerge in the top two emotions for any outlet.

Outlets in descending order by most negative sentiment	Sentiment	Primary Emotion
<i>Catholic Culture</i>	-0.365651	Anger
<i>Catholic Answers</i>	-0.297585	Fear
<i>Catholic News Agency</i>	-0.200711	Anger
<i>Catholic News Service</i>	-0.182549	Anger
<i>National Catholic Reporter</i>	-0.172397	Anger
<i>National Catholic Register</i>	-0.171922	Anger
<i>Our Sunday Visitor</i>	-0.142133	Fear
<i>America Magazine</i>	-0.12271	Anger
<i>American Catholic</i>	0.251432	Joy

Interesting fact: *National Catholic Register* and *National Catholic Reporter*, which are often seen by Catholics as occupying opposite sides of the political spectrum, have almost identical negativity scores.

Some telling patterns emerged when we looked at the sentiment and emotion scores in relation to other findings that emerged in this chapter and from our survey. *Catholic Culture* and *Catholic Answers*, the Catholic sites with the highest web traffic (as measured by CARA in 2012,) were also the outlets with the highest negativity in their headlines about Islam. Those two outlets also referenced Pope Francis the *least* in their headlines about Islam. Additionally, the outlet with the most positive sentiment mentions Pope Francis the most (*American Catholic*).

Mentioning Pope Francis often, or not at all, seems to impact the sentiment conveyed in headlines about Islam. When Pope Francis is mentioned very often, headlines are positive. But when he is not mentioned, the sentiment of headlines are the most negative.

The outlets with the most negative sentiment in their headlines were also the outlets that mentioned Pope Francis the least.

Fear was the primary emotion in the headlines for *Catholic Answers*, the outlet that most often referenced violence committed by Muslims. *Our Sunday Visitor*, which also had fear as its primary emotion, was the outlet to most often reference anti-Christian persecution in its articles.

CONCLUSION

In this section, we have seen that Pope Francis often comes up in coverage of Islam and Muslims in Catholic online publications, and how the pontiff's appearance in headlines relates to the sentiment conveyed. We also saw that headlines on Islam were largely negative, and shed light how Catholic media outlets differ in their treatment of topics related to Islam.

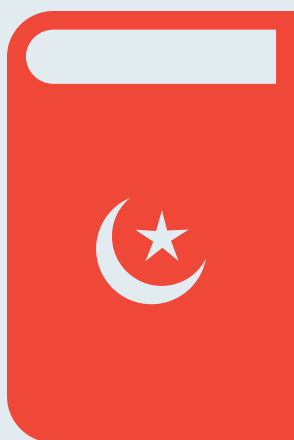
We also found that half of the times the word “Islamic” was used, it was in reference to the Islamic State terrorist group.

We hope that these findings give both producers and consumers of this content a clearer picture of how American Catholic media outlets discuss Islam.





Dialogue Despite Differences: What For-Sale Materials on Islam Convey to Their Catholic Audience





CHAPTER 3 TAKEAWAYS

1

There are **over 100 books**, audio programs, and DVDs that from American Catholic publishers that discuss Islam. Many of these attempt to **introduce Catholics to Islam** or **compare** Islam and Christianity.

2

The two book on Islam sold by the most Catholic publishers are *Inside Islam*, by Daniel Ali and Robert Spencer, and *The Bible and the Qur'an* by Jacques Jomier.

3

Differences between Christianity and Islam are often highlighted in this introductory and comparative materials. “Differences” is the most common word used in the descriptions of these books. Despite an emphasis on differences found in these materials, many of them still encourage Catholic readers to dialogue and work with Muslims.

4

The primary emotion in the titles of Catholic books on Islam is fear. The materials that introduce Catholics to Islam or compare Islam and Christianity have an overall negative sentiment in their titles.

5

The authors of a plurality of introductory or comparative resources **hoped their readers would engage in dialogue** after engaging with their material. Others hoped Catholic readers would **evangelize Muslims**, grow in their Catholic faith, or judge Islam for themselves as a result of digesting the content.



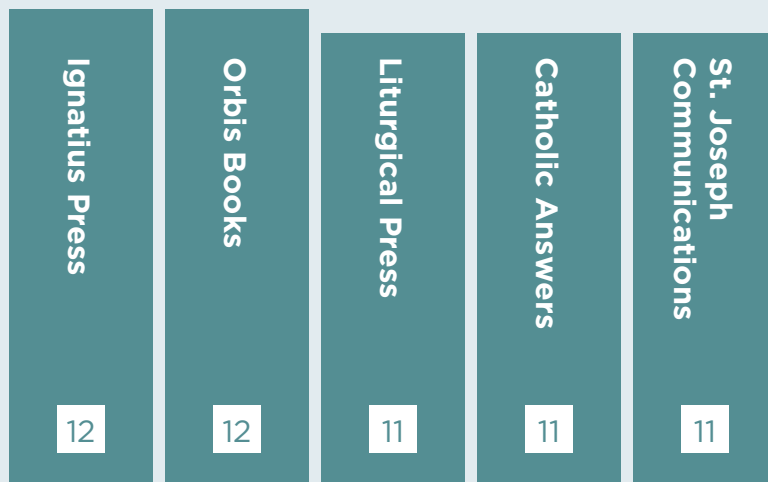
TAKEAWAYS

ISLAM

Islam does not only come up in Catholic news and commentary websites, but also in for-sale books and other resource materials. Aware that some Catholic publishing companies sell materials about Islam, we wanted to include resources from Catholic publishers — be they books and booklets in print, audiobooks, CD sets, or DVDs — in our study. Our analysis of these for-sale Catholic resources is the focus of this chapter.

We explored for-sale Catholic resources on Islam published by American Catholic publishing companies. They include materials with the sole purpose of helping Catholics learn about Islam, as well as others that reference Islam and Muslims less directly. Our full methodology for locating these Catholic resources about Islam can be found on page 121.

These are the Catholic publishers who sell the most resources on Islam and Muslims:



These publishers could arguably be seen as spanning the spectrum of “progressive” to “traditional” Catholics. Some of the publishers describe what they do quite differently. Catholic Answers’ motto is to “explain and defend the faith”¹ while Orbis Books, the publishing arm of the Maryknoll religious order, hopes their materials “invit[e] dialogue with diverse cultures and traditions, and serv[e] the cause of reconciliation and peace.”² Despite the diversity, all of these publishers publish extensively on Islam.

Thirty American Catholic publishers put out material on Islam and Muslims. We found that there are at least 123 items — whether they be books, audio programs, or DVDs — that discuss Islam and are intended for a lay Catholic audience. Some of these titles are sold by more than one publisher. (Three of the books included in our study were published by non-Catholic publishers, but were written by Catholics and for a Christian audience. One of these is now sold on a Catholic publisher’s website. The other two were chosen because their authors are well-known for their work on Islam.)

Some of these 123 items are sold by more than one publisher. For example, a book called *The Bible and the Qur’an* by Jacques Jomier was originally published by Ignatius Press but is also sold by Catholic Answers, Ignatius Productions, and St. Joseph Communications. As described in Chapter 4, Jomier’s book is also sold at all three major Catholic bookstores in Washington, D.C. *Inside Islam*, by Robert Spencer and Daniel Ali, is distributed by four different Catholic publishers,³ and one D.C. Catholic bookstore.

Some Catholic publishers sell just one book that related to Islam. But others sell nearly a dozen.

The two book on Islam sold by the most Catholic publishers are *Inside Islam*, by Daniel Ali and Robert Spencer, and *The Bible and the Qur’an*, by Jacques Jomier.

INTRODUCING ISLAM TO CATHOLICS

To begin answering the question of how Islam and Muslims are portrayed and discussed in these resources from Catholic publishers, we clustered the items by apparent topic. Using the title and the description found online to determine each material's main idea or purpose, we grouped them together into what became eighteen different categories.

Number of books by topic:

16 Introductions to Islam	7 Shared heritage & figures
13 Comparative look at Islam and Catholicism	6 Dialogue
12 Autobiography/ Biography	4 Pastoral guides on Islam and interreligious affairs
9 Apologetics	3 Children's or youth books
9 Classroom texts for interreligious education	3 Christianity from a Muslim Perspective
9 Saint Francis and Islam	3 Drama (feature films)
9 Spirituality and Prayer	2 Novels
8 History	1 Specific treatments of Islam
8 The Church and the Modern World	1 Theological/ philosophical

Most publishers' sell items from various categories. But for some publishers, the majority of their books fit into a single category. Of the five books sold by Ave Maria Press, three are dedicated to spirituality and prayer; four of EWTN Religious Catalogues' materials on Islam deal with the Church in the modern world; and four of Franciscan Institute Press' five are related to St. Francis specifically. Ignatius Productions, a ministry of the Fr. Mitch Pacwa, has four items (out of its total six) that deal comparatively with Islam. St. Mary's Press's items are all classroom textbooks, and four of the USCCB's six materials are pastoral aids.

The largest category of resources are **introductions to Islam** (16) — literature that is explicit in its intent to educate the reader about the religion of Muslims. The second most common category is made up of materials that took a comparative view of Islam and Christianity (13). A number of these seek to compare aspects of the religions, like their holy scriptures, or to point out differences or “critical questions” about the two faiths.

The largest categories of resources on Islam are introductions to the religion, followed by materials that take a comparative view of Islam and Christianity.

Biographical and autobiographical books are also very common; twelve of them were published. Many of these books tell more fairly contemporary stories of Christians who had lived (and died) in Muslim-majority countries. A couple also profile John of Damascus, a Christian who lived and worked in the Muslim-ruled Middle East in the 700s, and Queen Isabella of Spain, who with her husband expelled Muslims from Spain in the 15th century.

There are nine books on **apologetics**, materials that seek to defend the Catholic faith. Some of these were specifically focused on Islam; other mentioned Islam in addition to other topics. Two of these books come from Fr. Zakaria Botros, a Coptic priest well known in the Middle East for his harsh criticism of Islam and inflammatory statements about the Prophet Muhammad.⁴ There are also nine **classroom textbooks** for interreligious education in schools.



Nine books focus specifically on **St. Francis of Assisi**, or the Franciscan religious order, and Islam. These materials — which include a variety of genres — could have been categorized elsewhere (along with other historical, biographical, or dialogue-related books). But because of the sheer volume of books revolving around St. Francis of Assisi — particularly his encounter with the Muslim sultan, Malik al-Kamil, we assigned them their own category. There were also nine books on **spirituality and prayer**. Many of these focused on comparative spirituality or brought together prayers from various faith traditions.

Eight books recounted **historical** events. The majority of these were related to the Crusades or other battles between Christian and Muslim armies. Eight items were categorized into a group we called “**the Church in the modern world**,” which included DVD programs about the Holy Land, Pakistani Christians, Syrian refugees, and the Church’s interaction with Muslims and their faith today.

Seven books looked at **shared heritage and figures**, namely shared characters in figures in Muslims and Christians joint histories. Six publications focused on **Muslim-Christian dialogue** in general. Four were **pastoral guides** from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). (Note: Though we didn’t include Vatican statements, we did include pamphlets and booklets sold from the USCCB’s publishing arm.)

Three publications looked at **Christianity from a Muslim perspective**; three were feature length drama films; and three were **children’s books**. There were also two **novels**, one **specific treatment of Islam**, which focused on shariah, and one **theological** book, focusing on the ideas Christian de Cherge, a monk killed in Algeria in the 1990s, had about Muslims and salvation.

A full list of the materials, with their author, publisher, and category listed, can be found in Appendix C.



St. Francis of Assisi meets Sultan Malik al-Kamil during the Crusades

“DIALOGUE” WITH A DISTANT FAITH

To get further insight into how Islam and Muslims are discussed in Catholic publications, we looked at the words used in the materials’ titles. We describe our methodology for determining the top ten words in resource titles in the methodology section on page 121.

These are the words used most often in the titles of all 123 Catholic for-sale resources on Islam:



A word cloud on a light blue background showing the frequency of various terms. The words are arranged in a cluster, with 'dialogue' and 'world' being the largest. Other visible words include 'faith', 'Francis', 'answer', 'guide', 'interreligious', 'peace', 'religions', and 'crusades'.

dialogue faith
Francis
answer guide
interreligious
peace
religions
world
crusades

“**World**” was used most often – nine times — indicating that Islam is seen perhaps as a distant religion, part of the wider world. Several of these uses of “world” came up in world religion textbooks for school children. “**Dialogue**” was also used frequently — eight times. The Catholic Church is known for pioneering interreligious dialogue between Muslims and Christians in the wake of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s.⁵ “**Interreligious**,” which is used five times, is the word the Vatican uses when talking about its relations with people of other faiths. (“Interfaith” is less commonly used by the Church.)

The top two words used in titles — “world” and “dialogue” — suggest that Islam is viewed a distant religion but one that Catholics can be connected to through conversation and relationship.

The words “**guide**” and “**answer**” appear in the top ten, indicating what many of the materials see as their focus: guiding Catholics as they acquire knowledge about Islam, providing answers and helping them know more.

“**Crusades**” and “**Francis**,” which both appear five times in titles, point to the frequency with which specific medieval encounters between Christians and Muslims arise in Catholic books.

General terms like “**faith**,” “**peace**,” and “**religions**” also come up frequently, between five and six times.

HIGHLIGHTING THE DIFFERENCES

We also looked at the words used in the titles of the two biggest categories of materials — introductions to Islam and comparative resources. These categories were important to us to investigate in-depth because they are exclusively dedicated to providing a Catholic perspective on Islam — how it stands on its own, or relates to Christianity. (See methodology on page 121.) For this limited group of titles, words like “**Jesus**,” “**Qur’an**,” “**questions**,” and “**differences**” ranked in the top ten words used. “Dialogue,” and the words related to the medieval encounters, which appeared in the top ten when we looked at all 123 books’ titles, were *not* among the top ten with this limited group of introductory and comparative materials. (To see the full list of the top ten words in these titles, see Appendix E.)

This emphasis on differences between Catholics and Muslims came through even more when we looked at the descriptions of these resources. Using their online descriptions and introductory chapter, we identified where the author explicitly summarizes what the publication is about and what it tries to do. (See methodology on page 121.) In these descriptions, we found that “**differences**” was the most frequent word used — 17 times. In contrast, “common” was used 5 times. “Dialogue,” which was not among the top ten words used, was used eight times.

“Differences” was the most frequent word used the in the descriptions of books attempting to introduce Islam to Christianity, or to compare the two religions.



Top ten words used in the descriptions of introductory or comparative materials on Islam

differences

religion

teaching

questions

history

answer

faith

reader

Information

way

practices

AUTHORS HOPE THEIR MATERIALS WILL PUSH READERS TO DIALOGUE WITH MUSLIMS, AND, IN SOME CASES, EVANGELIZE

We also wanted to identify what impact the authors of these introductory or comparative materials hoped their books would have on readers. We asked, *What did authors want their readers to know or to do as a result of consuming the content?* While reading through the materials' online descriptions and introductory sections, we looked for authors to explicitly state what they hope their readers' do as a result of consuming the content. We coded these instances and grouped them by emergent theme. Over a dozen distinct goals were expressed, but a few come up more frequently than others:

The authors of eleven publications (a plurality) hope that readers would **engage in dialogue, or work for peace and reconciliation.**

Four hope that readers would reach out to Muslims to **evangelize.**

Three hope that readers would become **better Christians** or have a **new grasp of their faith.**

Another three want readers to be able to **“judge” or “decide” about Islam for themselves.**

To see a complete list of the ways authors hoped their materials would impact readers, see Appendix D.

Despite an emphasis on differences found in these introductory and comparative materials, there is still encourage Catholics to dialogue with Muslims and work together.

FEAR OF ISLAM: THE SENTIMENT AND EMOTION CONVEYED

The last way we addressed our question about how Islam and Muslims are portrayed in materials from Catholic publishers was to do a sentiment analysis. We wanted to know both the sentiment and primary emotion that came through in the titles of all of the Catholic publications, and of the subset of introductory and comparative materials. To read about our methodology for conducting the sentiment analysis, see page 121.

A sentiment and emotion analysis of book titles uncovered that the overall sentiment of the 123 titles was **positive**. The primary emotion in these titles was **fear**, followed by anger. (The other three emotions that a computer can read are joy, disgust and anger.)

The subset of titles from the introductory and comparative resources had a different sentiment reading and a stronger level of emotion. The sentiment of this subset was slightly **negative**, and there was a **stronger level of fear** than what was measured in the larger group of titles.



The primary emotion in the titles of Catholic books on Islam is fear. The titles of materials that introduce Catholics to Islam or compare Islam and Christianity have a negative sentiment overall.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT?

Some might wonder what impact these materials have on American Catholics' views of Islam and Muslims. *Do Catholics even consume this material?* As mentioned in Chapter 1, most Catholics report not consuming Catholic news media frequently. However, we do know from the books' sales numbers that, in some cases, Catholics publications sell well. *The Bible and the Qur'an*, a book by Jacques Jomier and one of the best-selling Catholic books on Islam, has sold over 23,000 copies. It focuses on the "profound differences between Christian scripture and Islamic sacred texts." A pamphlet, "Islam: What Catholics Should Know" by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk has sold over 100,000 copies.

We reached out to Catholic publishers, and asked them to provide the total numbers sold of the introductory and comparative materials. While some of the publishers had no problem telling us their exact sales numbers, others only gave us a general range. Some publishers also refused to provide these numbers, with one in particular — Ascension Press, which published *Inside Islam* by Daniel Ali and Robert Spencer — retracting what they initially shared with us. In Appendix D, we provide the number of book sales (where this information was made available to us).

We also visited brick-and-mortar Catholic bookstores in the Washington, D.C. area to see which resources they sell. We found several books on Islam sold at these locations, including *The Bible and the Qur'an*, by Jomier, which is sold at all three D.C. area bookstores. For more on our visits to these stores — and what we found — see Chapter 5.

***The Bible and the Qur'an* by Jacques Jomier is the best-selling full-length book in our study. A flyer, "Islam: What Catholics Should Know" by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk, has sold over 100,000 copies since 2005.**

WHO ARE THE MAIN VOICES?

In addition to shedding light on the content produced by Catholic publishers, we were also curious to know which authors were most prolific in publishing on Islam for a Catholic audience. In Chapter 4, we identify seven prominent authors, look at how they discuss about Islam and Muslims, and what their impact is both inside and outside Catholic circles.

CONCLUSION

The field of for-sale Catholic publications on Islam is larger than many might expect.

The hundred-plus books, booklets, audio programs, and videos we identified look at Islam in the context of prayer, historical encounters, common figures, and current events.

Many of them seek to inform Catholics about this religious group, compare Islam and Christianity, or put forth the ‘truth’ of Catholicism as opposed to Islam. Though they often highlight religious differences, many also seek to empower Catholics to engage with Muslims.

We hope these new insights into the field of Catholic resources about Islam inform Catholic consumers about the materials that exist, and also make the publishing companies more aware of the portrayals of Islam in their materials.





Who are the main Catholics authors on Islam? What is their impact, and are they tied to Islamophobia?





CHAPTER 4 TAKEAWAYS

1
Prominent Catholic authors of introductory materials on Islam take varied approaches to the religion in their writing. Some recount their experiences of dialogue and others focus on evangelism or how Islam is a “threat.”



2
A number of individuals in the Islamophobia industry have impacted American Catholic discussions about Islam. In some cases, Catholic publishers, news outlets, and prominent figures have promoted their views. The work of author Robert Spencer, who leads an organization that has been named an anti-Muslim hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, has been distributed widely in both Catholic and secular outlets across the United States.

3
At least three Catholics who write regularly on Islam for Catholic outlets maintain connections to anti-Muslim groups and activists.

TAKEAWAYS



In this report, we not only wanted to look at *what* was being said about Islam in Catholic publications, but *who* was saying it. We were curious to identify the main authors of for-sale materials, and to learn how widespread their influence is inside and outside Catholic circles.

Because of our work on Islamophobia, we also wanted to explore how individuals identified as part of the “Islamophobia network” or “industry” have impacted public American Catholic discussions about Islam. These concerns are the topic of this chapter.

PROMINENT AUTHORS OF INTRODUCTORY CATHOLIC MATERIALS ON ISLAM

Dozens of individuals have authored or edited Catholic books on Islam, and several individuals hosted the audio and video programs that made up the other items sold by Catholic publishers we highlighted in Chapter 3. We wanted to look at those who had contributed most often to for-sale Catholic materials on Islam, and who had specifically contributed to an introductory or comparative resource. We identified individuals who are authors of at least two materials included in our study. (This includes authors of books, but also hosts of audio or DVD programs.) Of those authors, we isolated those that had contributed to at least one book or program that explicitly seeks to introduce readers to Islam or compare it to Christianity.

From the many authors, we found seven that met these criteria. We explored the writing and activities of the following authors in-depth: Daniel Ali, George Dardess, Sister Mary Margaret Funk, OSB, Scott Hahn, Fr. Mitch Pacwa, S.J., Jesse Romero, and Robert Spencer. From their published works on Islam that were included in our study, we examined their approach to Islam and their stated goals for the book or program.

We found that five of these seven authors focus on evangelizing — or sharing the Christian faith — with Muslims. Three describe Islam as a “threat” to Christians. And two authors focus more on encouraging dialogue seeking converts.

A majority of these authors want to educate Catholics about Islam so their readers will share the Christian faith with Muslims.

Using online searches of their name and “Islam,” “Muslims,” and “Catholic,” we also explored their activities and other writing, identifying Catholic and non-Catholic outlets in which their work appears. We also made note of these authors’ appearances and speaking engagements in Catholic and secular venues, and kept track of endorsements of their work by fellow Catholics. Below, we profile each of these seven authors and their work on Islam.

“I carried on my life’s mission of reaching Muslims. That mission achieved new urgency after the horrific events of September 11, 2001. It became clear to many that either the Muslims will aggressively ‘evangelize’ the West through their various forms of jihad, or we will evangelize them with the Good News of Jesus Christ.”¹

Daniel Ali is the co-author with Robert Spencer of the 2003 book, *Inside Islam: A Guide for Catholics*, which was published by Ascension Press. He also a contributor with Fr. Mitch Pacwa, S.J. to *Islam & Christianity*, a multi-part video and audio lecture series to teach Muslims about Christianity published by Ignatius Productions, a media ministry of Fr. Pacwa.

As a former Muslim, Ali seeks to educate his audience about Islam, and also speaks of the need to bring Muslims to the Catholic faith. From *Inside Islam*, he and his co-author, Spencer, hope that readers may “more fully grasp [their] Catholic faith” and “the deficiencies of many Islamic beliefs” (p. 17). They also hope that their book will “be a powerful tool to equip Catholics to become better witnesses of their own faith to Muslims...those who embrace this challenging faith” (p. 20.) Ali’s DVD series with Fr. Pacwa, *Islam & Christianity*, is intended to give Christians an understanding of Islam to help Christians to introduce Muslims to Christianity.

As he described in multiple appearances on the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) show, “The Journey Home”² and elsewhere, Ali grew up in northern Iraq. He was raised Muslim, but describes being enthralled with Christianity even as a child. After a harrowing series of events including imprisonment in Iraq and escape, Ali says, he converted to Christianity in 1995.³ He became a Roman Catholic in 1998.

In August 2001, Ali founded the Christian-Islamic Forum, located in Reston, Virginia. Its mission, according to documents obtained through Guidestar, is to “reduce mistrust and misunderstanding between religions.”⁴ Today, the organization no longer appears to be in operation. Its associated blog does not appear to have been updated in recent years.

Ali has published two other books, *Out of Islam, Free at Last*, and *Women in Islam: Lifting the Veil*. His fourth book, *Muslim Objections to Jesus Christ*, is forthcoming. Ali also contributed an essay to a 2011 book about converts to Catholicism.⁵

According to a biography on the Center for Evangelical Catholicism's website,⁶ Daniel Ali has spoken about Islam at churches and parishes across the country, often to large audiences.⁷ When speaking to these audiences, Ali often describes his approach to evangelization to Muslims, using the Qur'an (rather than the Bible) to argue for the truth of Catholicism.⁸ Ali has also given talks at the Franciscan University at Steubenville and the Catholic Information Center, a Catholic bookstore in Washington, D.C. In recent years, he also traveled to Israel to preach to Jews and Arabs there.⁹

Ali has also advised the U.S. military and government¹⁰ and he presented at an August 2016 conference called, "The Prophet and the Messiah: Catholicism and the Challenge of Islam," organized by the Center for Evangelical Catholicism's program for Islamic studies.¹¹ On his personal website, he offers consulting services on workplace violence prevention, and advertises lecture topics such as "The Challenge of Islam and Jihad to the Christian Faith" and "How Western Free Societies Can Resist Islamic Radicalization."¹²

As a former Muslim who converted to Catholicism, Ali writes and speaks on what he calls the "challenge of Islam," and emphasizes the importance of sharing Christianity with Muslims.

“I had come to the [mosque] out of what I saw as my baptismal calling to be present to the Other. To study the Quran meant deepening my own faith, and to do so not by triumphantly discovering the Quran’s supposed ‘faults’ or ‘insufficiencies,’ but by entering as fully as possible into the experience of people for whom the Quran is the vehicle of God’s presence.”

George Dardess is the author of three books in our study: *Meeting Islam: A Guide for Christians*, a 2005 book for Paraclete Press; *Do We Worship the Same God?: Comparing the Bible and the Qur’an* published by St. Anthony Messenger in 2006; *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan: Catholics and Muslims Working Together for the Common Good*, written in 2011 with Marvin Krier Mich for Orbis Books.

In *Meeting Islam*, Dardess uses his own experiences of dialogue with Muslims to introduce his readers to Islam. He doesn’t present this information in a “neutral” way, he says, but with a “positive, slightly distanced approach” (p. v). He hopes to guide readers to forge relationships with Muslims and learn about their faith from them (p. vi), and writes about how facets of Islam may enhance Christians’ understanding of their own religion.

In *Do We Worship the Same God?*, Dardess intends to guide readers as they tackle this question, and he encourages readers to come to their own conclusions (p.6). His 2011 book uses the medieval story of St. Francis of Assisi and the Sultan Malik al-Kamil to guide Catholics and Muslims in forming an interfaith, “social justice-oriented community” today.

Dardess converted to Catholicism in 1983.¹³ Holding a Ph.D. in English literature and an master’s degree in theology, he was a professor at Tufts University, and is now retired.¹⁴

In 1993, he began studying Arabic, reading the Qur’an, and learning about Islam at his local mosque.¹⁵ In 1999, he entered formation to be a deacon in the Catholic Church,¹⁶ and served at a parish in Rochester.¹⁷ He is a consultant to the diocese of Rochester on interfaith dialogue, served as the chair of Rochester’s Commission Muslim-Christian Relations, and helped formalize the city’s Muslim Catholic Alliance Agreement of Understanding and Cooperation.¹⁸ Dardess has spoken at parishes on topics such as “Scapgoating Migrants and Muslims” in 2011¹⁹ and “A Catholic Meets Islam: Discovering Social Justice in the Enemy Other.”²⁰

His books, which also include *Reclaiming Beauty for the Good of the World: Muslim & Christian Creativity as Moral Power*, have been reviewed in *America* and *Catholic Courier*. He wrote about his journey through Islam in a 2011 article published in *St. Anthony Messenger*, and wrote an article about the Qur’an as art in *Christian Century*.²¹ His approach to Islam and the Qur’an has also been discussed in two academic books²² and articles.²³

Dardess emphasizes dialogue with Muslims to “[enter] as fully as possible into the experience of [Muslims]” and for the purpose of “working together for the common good.”

MARY MARGARET FUNK, OSB

> Participating in Dialogue and Promoting Similarities

“...I could give a compelling case for Islam as a benefit to all of us. Should they practice it to its extent, and we practice the Gospels to its extent, the world is just a much better place and we need not fear.”²⁴

Mary Margaret Funk, OSB, is the author of two resources included in our study: the 2004 booklet *Islam: What Catholic Should Know* from Liguori Press and *Islam Is... An Experience of Dialogue and Devotion* from Lantern Press in 2008. The forward to *Islam Is* was written by John Borelli, who ran the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' dialogues with Muslims and now works at Georgetown University.

Sister Funk writes about Islam from her personal experience of dialogue with Muslims, and speaks of her appreciation for Islam. “In an effort to bridge the gaps that seem to divide Christianity and Islam” in *Islam Is*, she shows how learning about Islam — and its similarities with Christianity — has impacted her faith. In the booklet, she introduces the reader to Islam's five pillars and actively points out aspects she sees as similarities between Christianity and Islam. In both materials, Sr. Funk emphasizes that Christians and Muslims believe in the same God.

Sister Funk is a Benedictine nun who lives at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, Indiana.²⁵ She has served as the Executive Director of the board of Monastic

Interreligious Dialogue, an organization that brings together contemplatives from various faith traditions.²⁶ Sr. Funk was a member of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' annual Midwest Dialogue of Catholics and Muslims, the official Catholic-Muslim dialogue run by the Church in the United States.²⁷ Holding two graduate degrees,²⁸ she is a retreat leader and the author of several books on prayer and the spiritual life.²⁹

The author of several other books on spirituality and prayer, Sr. Funk's interfaith work has been featured in *U.S. Catholic* magazine,³⁰ *American Catholic Radio*, *St. Anthony Messenger*.³¹

Her activities have been covered in the diocesan newspaper in Indianapolis, Indiana.³² Her work was also featured in an exhibit at the Indianapolis Public Library in 2011.³³ Her dialogue activities were written about in the book *Peace Be With You: Monastic Wisdom for a Terror-Filled World*.³⁴

Having participated in dialogue with Muslims in an official capacity, Sr. Funk encourages dialogue to “bridge gaps” between Christians and Muslims and identify similarities.

SCOTT HAHN

> Professor Pointing Out Differences

“For the last quarter of a century or so, I have shared a conviction with a growing number of people, a growing number of scholars, that Islam really does represent the single greatest force of the third millennium and also the single greatest challenge and threat to Christianity worldwide.”³⁵

Scott Hahn is the presenter in three audio programs on Islam published by Lighthouse Catholic Media included in our study. They are *Abba or Allah: Important Differences Between Catholicism and Islam*, which was adapted from a 2011 talk he gave at the Franciscan University of Steubenville’s “Defending the Faith” conference; *Un-holy War: Catholic Reflections on Islam*; and *Stand Up for Your Faith*, in which readers will learn, among other things, “why Islam poses the greatest threat in the new millennium.”³⁶

In these audio programs, Hahn discusses Islam, which he sees as a “threat” to Christians, in the context of evangelization, apologetics, and Christian persecution in the Middle East. In *Abba or Allah*, he points out what he sees as similarities with Muslims but explains that “the dissimilarities are greater,” particularly how Christians and Muslims understand and relate to God. This topic also arises in *Un-holy War*, in which he refers to Islam as “a religion of divine slavery,” compared to the Christian religion of “divine sonship.”

For Hahn, learning about Islam also motivated him to rediscover aspects of Christianity, and led him to develop a new appreciation for his faith. He hopes that by

learning about Islam, Catholics will better understand their faith and share their faith with Muslims.

Holding a Ph.D. in biblical theology, Hahn has taught at Franciscan University of Steubenville since 1990. He is also the founder and president of the Saint Paul Center for Biblical Theology.³⁷ He is known by American Catholics widely for his speaking on the Bible and apologetics, and for his conversion to Catholicism. Formerly a Presbyterian minister, he became Catholic in 1986.³⁸

Hahn’s published writing is not primarily on Islam. However, he occasionally references it on social media³⁹ and has brought up Islam in some of his writings, like *The Creed: Professing the Faith Through the Ages*.⁴⁰ Hahn has also cited and promoted the work of Robert Spencer,⁴¹ one of the other authors in our study.⁴² Hahn has facilitated taped conversations about Islam with Spencer at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, which have been aired on EWTN, a major American Catholic television network.⁴³

Viewing Islam as a challenge to Christians, Hahn encourages Catholics to learn more about the religion.

MITCH PACWA, S.J.

> Priest Educating for Evangelization

“...I think that we also have to understand our own identity over and against Islam, and not be cowed or treated like the weak kid in the face of bullying... When you have bullies you have to stand up to them and face them down. So you show respect, you don’t go looking for a fight, but neither do you back down from it when it is brought to your door.”⁴⁴

Fr. Mitch Pacwa, S.J., a Jesuit priest, is a presenter in four multi-media resources on Islam included in our study. They are: *Christianity and Islam: Are We at War?*; *Islam & Christianity*, a multi-part video series done with Daniel Ali (mentioned above); *The Bible and the Qur’an: Their Differing Depictions of Jesus and the Holy Spirit*; and *Our Lady, the Eucharist, and Islam*. All of these were published by Ignatius Productions, a Catholic media organization founded by Fr. Pacwa, who is Jesuit priest.

Fr. Pacwa hopes that, in learning about Islam, his Christian audience will feel able to dialogue with Muslims and “guide” them “to the fullness of the Christian faith.” In *Christianity and Islam: Are We at War?*, he points to the history of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad, and the Qur’an to explain present-day conflicts between Christians and Muslims. In *Our Lady, the Eucharist, and Islam*, he shares how Christians can “use this deeper understanding” of Jesus’s mother, Mary — a figure mentioned in the Qur’an and whom Muslims look to as a spiritual guide — to evangelize Muslims. In *The Bible and the Qur’an*, he points to areas of agreement between Christians and Muslims, “but mostly draws a sharp contrast” between the teachings about Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Pacwa is most well-known for his presence on EWTN, the major Catholic television channel. He has three weekly shows, one of which runs in a primetime slot, in addition to a radio program on EWTN radio. He discusses Church documents, contemporary issues relating to Catholics, and offers the rosary prayer. Fr. Pacwa was ordained a priest in 1976 and holds a Ph.D. in Old Testament studies from Vanderbilt University, among other degrees. He has traveled extensively in the Middle East and is fluent in twelve languages, including Arabic.⁴⁵ Fr. Pacwa has also published *The Holy Land: An Armchair Pilgrimage*, along with dozens of other products on his Ignatius Productions website.

Fr. Pacwa penned the forward a booklet in our study called *Beginning Apologetics 9: Answering Muslims*, and also wrote the forward for *Inside Islam: A Guide for Catholics*, the book by Ali and Robert Spencer. He gives talks on Islam for Catholic audiences, like one he gave in August 2016 to an web audience convened by the Catholic publication *Our Sunday Visitor*.⁴⁷

A major Catholic television personality, Fr. Pacwa hopes to educate Catholics about Islam so they can reach out to Muslims and share the Catholic faith with them.

JESSE ROMERO

> Radio Host Warning About Islam

“Our motive is not to incite the West against Islam, promote ‘Israeli interests,’ or ‘demonize’ Muslims, but to draw Muslims away from the dead legalism of Shariah to the spirituality of Christianity.”⁴⁸

Jesse Romero is a presenter in three audio programs from St. Joseph Communications included in our study: *Critical Questions Between Islam and Christianity*, which also features Terry Barber and Robert Spencer; *Fire and Sword: The Crusades*, with Matthew Arnold and Edmund Mazza; and *Sharia Law Exposed*.

Romero refers to Islam as a “very aggressive religion,” and argues that its “intellectual suicide is a threat to us all.” In *Sharia Law Exposed*, he says that Christians “have no idea what we are up against unless we take a careful look at what is held theologically” and at Sharia law. In *Fire and Sword* Romero and the other presenters examine the “extraordinary events we call the Crusades” and “dispel modern myths.” In the audio program *Critical Questions Between Islam and Christianity*, Romero talks to Spencer about his book *Not Peace But a Sword*, discussing the “illusion that both religions can ‘coexist’ peacefully today.”

Romero had a career as a kickboxer before devoting his time to Catholic apologetics and evangelization in Catholic media.⁴⁹ With a master’s in biblical theology, he co-hosts a daily radio show in English on Immaculate Heart Radio, and other radio show in Spanish.⁵⁰ He also runs a website and online store, On Fire Evangelization, where he sells audio programs, including the ones also sold from St. Joseph Communications. There he also sells programs on Islam like “Islam: Is it a religion of peace? No!,” “On Islam and Terrorism: Interview with Robert Spencer,”⁵¹ and “Speaking Truth to a Muslim.”⁵² Romero’s written work on Islam is limited but he posts occasionally about Islam on his Facebook fan page, where he has suggested President Obama might be an “Islamist sympathizer.”⁵³

As an evangelist, Romero warns Catholics about Islam and encourages his audience to “draw Muslims...to the spirituality of Christianity.”

ROBERT SPENCER

> Writer Concerned with “Threat” of Islam

“Islam increasingly poses a challenge to the Church and every Christian...Even if he or she never meets a Muslim, much less proclaims the Gospel to one, it is every Christian’s duty to become informed about Islam since that faith is the Church’s chief and most energetic present-day rival for souls.”⁵⁴

Robert Spencer is the author with Daniel Ali of *Inside Islam: A Guide for Catholics*, published in 2003 by Ascension Press, and *Not Peace But a Sword: The Great Chasm Between Christianity and Islam*, published by Catholic Answers in 2013. He is also a main contributor to the St. Joseph Communication’s audio program *Critical Questions Between Islam and Christianity* with Jesse Romero and Terry Barber.

Spencer encourages his Catholic audience to learn about Islam so they can evangelize Muslims, and also because, in his words, “Islam constitutes a threat to the world at large.” In *Inside Islam*, his book with Ali, he writes that “despite having agreement with Christianity on some fundamental beliefs, Islam’s theology and aggressive growth are not benign realities. Indeed, Christians ignore them at their own risk” (p.16). For Spencer, “Islam is not merely a religion; it is a social and political ideology that makes sharp distinctions between Muslims and non-Muslims, particularly regarding rights and status. Islam needs to be taken seriously by all,” especially Catholics (p.26).

In *Not Peace But a Sword*, he discusses the “great chasm” between Islam and

Christianity, and describes “how in certain important ways we may not be able to get along, and indeed should not work closely together (even as we strive to preserve harmonious relations)...” (p.11). He discusses his book with Jesse Romero in *Critical Questions Between Islam and Christianity*, and “shows why the fact is, there is little common ground for such co-existence...and not from the Catholic side.”

Spencer runs a website called Jihad Watch, where he argues that Islam encourages violence, and leads with Pamela Geller a group that has been named by the Southern Poverty Law Center as an anti-Muslim hate group.⁵⁵ Their group generated the firestorm surrounding what they dubbed the “Ground Zero Mosque” in New York City; put up controversial advertisements about Islam on metropolitan buses and in subway stations; and hosted a draw Muhammad cartoon contest.⁵⁶

Spencer is the author of fifteen books, two of which are *New York Times* best sellers. In addition to *Inside Islam* and *Not Peace But a Sword*, he wrote a third book for a Christian audience in 2007: *Religion of Peace?: Why Christianity Is and Islam Isn’t*,

published by Regnery Press. Spencer holds a Master's degree in religious studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he studied early Christian history.⁵⁷ Named as a "misinformation expert" in the Center for American Progress' Islamophobia reports, he has frequently appeared on national television networks to talk about Islam and terrorism.⁵⁸

Having published in dozens of major secular outlets, he has also written for numerous American Catholic outlets and appeared in Catholic venues. His books and work have been reviewed positively in *National Catholic Register*, where he was called the "foremost Catholic expert on Islam in our country."⁵⁹ He was quoted as an expert in a 2015 *Our Sunday Visitor* article on Islam and violence.⁶⁰ He has written for *Crisis Magazine*,⁶¹ and for *Catholic Answers'* website. He has also appeared on *Catholic Answers'* podcast and radio programs.⁶²

His articles from Jihad Watch are frequently reposted on the webpage for *Kresta in the Afternoon*, a radio show of Ave Maria Radio.⁶³ Spencer has also given several talks on Islam and violence at Franciscan University of Steubenville,⁶⁴ some of which have been televised on EWTN.⁶⁵ His work has been

cited in other Catholic publications like *Homiletics and Pastoral Review* and *Catholic World Report*, and he has been endorsed by prominent Catholic voices like Scott Hahn, Mitch Pacwa, and Patrick Madrid. He has also been quoted as an expert by Catholic writers like Kathryn Jean Lopez, William Kilpatrick, and Fr. James Schall.

Spencer is the former head of a Catholic homeschool organization, and it has been reported that Spencer serves as a Catholic deacon, though he has not discussed this publically.⁶⁶

There have been controversies surrounding some of Spencer's speaking engagements at Catholic institutions.⁶⁷ The Diocese of Worcester rescinded their invitation to have him speak at a men's conference, and the Diocese of Sacramento didn't allow a homeschool conference he was speaking at to be held on church property.⁶⁸ Spencer's appearance at a conference called "Is Islam a Religion of Peace," hosted by Al Kresta, also drew criticism.⁶⁹

Though he writes primarily for a national audience, Spencer also writes specifically to Catholics, questioning the wisdom of collaborating with Muslims and encouraging evangelization.

INFLUENCE OF THE ISLAMOPHOBIA INDUSTRY

Because of our work on Islamophobia, we were curious to know if individuals who have been identified as part of the Islamophobia industry are connected to or have influenced public American Catholic discussions about Islam. We knew from our research on Catholic authors that Robert Spencer, who has been named as a player in the Islamophobia industry by several organizations, is an influential voice in some Catholic circles. But we were curious if others in the Islamophobia network also wrote or spoke in Catholic contexts.

Working from the Center for American Progress' Islamophobia network website,⁷⁰ which identifies individuals that generate and spread misinformation and fear about Muslims, we searched the web to see if those identified as “misinformation experts,” “validators,” and “activists” have written for or been featured in American Catholic publications. We found that two individuals in the Islamophobia network (other than Robert Spencer, who we already discussed) fit this criteria:

> **Zuhdi Jasser, Commentator**

Dr. Zuhdi Jasser is a physician who runs a group called the American Islamic Forum for Democracy, which was founded in 2003. He appears often as a commentator on Islam on Fox News and other outlets, and has furthered conspiracy theories about Muslims in the United States.⁷¹ He was called as a witness in the “Muslim radicalization” hearing held by Rep. Peter King in 2011, and is a former appointee to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.⁷² Jasser has made occasional appearances on EWTN's nightly news program,⁷³ and has been quoted or cited in *Catholic News Agency*,⁷⁴ the *National Catholic Register*,⁷⁵ and *Catholic World Report*.⁷⁶

> **Walid Phares, Trump Advisor**

Walid Phares is a commentator on Islam, having appeared often in outlets like Fox News. According to the *Washington Post*, Phares was once a “leading ideologue” of an armed Christian group during the Lebanese civil war.⁷⁷ He has since been an advisor to Republican politicians, most recently the GOP presidential nominee, Donald Trump. For years, Phares has appeared on EWTN's nightly news program and its primetime program “The World Over” to comment on topics related to Islam.⁷⁸

The Center for American Progress identifies Jasser and Phares as Islamophobia “validators,” individuals who — because of their Muslim or Middle Eastern background — are able to more effectively communicate the conspiracy theories put out by anti-Muslim think tanks.

CATHOLIC CONNECTIONS TO ISLAMOPHOBIC GROUPS

While conducting our study we also noticed anecdotally that there are a few Catholic figures who write and speak on Islam, who also have ties to individuals and entities named as part of the Islamophobia network. Here, we summarize their collaboration with these groups and give brief examples of their writing and speaking on Islam:

> **Al Kresta, Catholic Radio Host**

The host of “Kresta in the Afternoon,” the “flagship” program of Ave Maria Radio, Al Kresta gave a talk at an event hosted by the American Freedom Law Center, a law firm formed by David Yerushalmi, the architect of model legislation that stirred up fears about sharia across the country.⁷⁹ At the event in Kresta gave a talk entitled, “Why Islam is Not Just Another American Religion.”⁸⁰ In 2010, Kresta held a conference on Islam that featured Robert Spencer. Kresta said of the conference, “When this conference is over, Christians and Muslims won’t be holding hands and singing Kumbayah.” When controversy arose around Spencer’s participation, Kresta defended the choice to include him. In recent months, Kresta’s blog on Ave Maria Radio’s site has reposted Spencer’s articles from JihadWatch and elsewhere. Spencer has also been a guest on Kresta’s radio program.

> **William Kilpatrick, Writes for *Crisis Magazine* and *Catholic World Report***

Kilpatrick is the author of *Christianity, Islam and Atheism: The Struggle for the Soul of the West*, published by Ignatius Press in 2012. Kilpatrick writes frequently for *Crisis Magazine*, *Catholic World Report*, and *National Catholic Register*. He often cites Robert Spencer⁸³ and the blogger, Pamela Geller,⁸⁴ who is best known for her activism with Spencer to oppose the “Ground Zero Mosque” and for orchestrating a Muhammad cartoon contest. Kilpatrick

also wrote a blurb endorsing Spencer’s book, *Not Peace But a Sword*. Kilpatrick produces his many articles on Islam through the Turning Point Project, which is “dedicated to educating Catholics...about the threat from Islam by arming them with the information...necessary to meet the challenge.”⁸⁵ The project is supported, in part, by Robert Shillman, whose foundation has also funded Pamela Geller’s work.⁸⁶ Shillman is also a board member and donor to the David Horowitz Freedom Center, which houses numerous websites, including Spencer’s Jihad Watch and Frontpage Magazine, where Kilpatrick reposts his articles and writes original pieces.

> **Andrew Bieszad, Writes for OnePeterFive**

Andrew Bieszad is the author of *20 Answers: Islam*, a 2014 booklet published by Catholic Answers,⁸⁷ and *Lions of the Faith: Saints, Blessed, and Heroes of the Catholic Faith in the Struggle with Islam*.⁸⁸ With a degree in Islamic Studies from Hartford Seminary,⁸⁹ he posts often at the Catholic blog OnePeterFive,⁹⁰ and multiple times a day on a website run by Walid Shoebat.⁹¹ Named as a “validator” in the Center for American Progress’ Islamophobia reports, Shoebat is a pundit who promotes conspiracy theories and has appeared in Islamophobic films like *Obsession*.⁹² He claims he was a “radicalized Muslim” and “former terrorist” who converted to Christianity.⁹³ Writing on Shoebat’s site about an arson at a halal butcher shop in the UK, Bieszad said, “Thank goodness somebody had the sense to do something... It is important to pray and pray strongly, but for Christians, it is critical that we act after we pray because that is what we are supposed to do – pray, then act. As they say in Britain, ‘Good work, mate!’”⁹⁴ Bieszad’s also spoke at Ave Maria Radio’s conference on Islam in 2013, and also appears frequently on the Catholic Veritas Radio Network to talk about Islam.⁹⁵

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have highlighted Catholic authors who produced numerous resources on Islam for Catholic publishers.

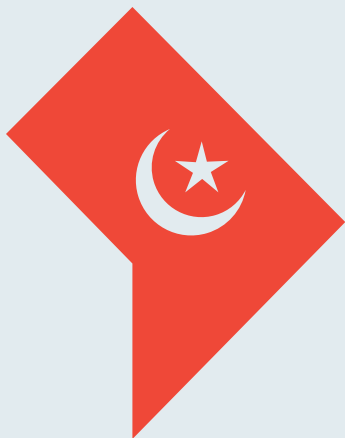
Some more than others have been featured in Catholic publications and venues in recent years, and one in particular, Robert Spencer, has exercised influence in conversations about Islam on the national stage. Spencer, and others who have been named as part of the Islamophobia industry, have contributed to the production of content on Islam for an American Catholic audience.

It is unclear whether Catholic publishing companies and media outlets are aware of these connections to the Islamophobia industry. In any case, they would do well to examine closely their content on Islam and its authors. In a time of increased Islamophobia, Catholic publishers and media outlets should inform their readers of authors' activities and their statements about Islam, particularly if they have generated controversy.





Local Focus: Materials on Islam at D.C. Catholic Bookstores





CHAPTER 5 TAKEAWAYS

¹
All three Catholic bookstores in Washington, D.C. sell multiple books on Islam, and say that **providing an orthodox Catholic perspective** is a criterion for the books they sell.



²
One book, *The Bible and the Qur'an* by Jacques Jomier, was sold at all three bookstores in the D.C. area.

³
Books by **Robert Spencer** are also sold at two of these bookstores, but it is unclear if those running the bookstores are familiar with Spencer and his positions or activities.

TAKEAWAYS

OUR

Our report has thus far provided a broad picture of the American Catholic publications and voices that address Islam. Most of this research was done by utilizing online resources, looking at what is distributed in online publisher stores or on Catholic news and commentary websites.

We asked ourselves, how does what we observed online translate into brick-and-mortar Catholic bookstores? Because of Georgetown University's location in the Washington, D.C. area, where there are three major Catholic bookstores, we decided to stop by their storefronts to see what they sell on Islam and how they present it. We also wanted to speak to those that run these stores to learn about how they make decisions about what to sell.

Between September 2014 and September 2015, we visited three bookstores in the Washington, D.C. area: the Catholic Information Center in downtown Washington, the bookstore of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in the city's Brookland neighborhood, and Pauline Books and Media, located across the river in Alexandria, Virginia. In this brief chapter, we describe what we found and learned from each store visit.

THE NATIONAL SHRINE BOOKSTORE

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, also known as the national basilica, is the largest Roman Catholic church in North America.¹ Referred to as “America’s Catholic Church,” it houses a large gift shop and bookstore that is visited by nearly one million visitors annually that travel on pilgrimage to see the grand basilica and its shrines to Mary.

When we visited the bookstore and perused its shelves, we found a number of titles relating to Islam, most of which were in the sections on apologetics or Eastern Christianity. They included several that came up in our online survey of Catholic publishers’ resources on Islam, most of which focus on apologetics and differences between Catholics and Muslims:

- *Inside Islam: A Guide for Catholics* by Daniel Ali and Robert Spencer
- *Dangers to the Faith: Recognizing Catholicism’s 21st Century Opponents* by Al Kresta
- *The Bible and the Qur’an* by Jacques Jomier
- *Beginning Apologetics 9: How to Answer Muslims* by Fr. Frank Chacon and Jim Burnham
- *111 Questions on Islam* by Samir Khalil Samir
- *Abba and Allah: Important Differences Between Catholicism and Islam* by Scott Hahn

The National Shrine also sold a compilation of documents on interreligious dialogue put out by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), and two books about the Trappist monks of Tibhirine, who were killed in the 1990s during the civil war in Algeria.

When we visited the National Shrine shop in September 2014, we spoke with the bookstore representative about the criteria for the books they sell, particularly on Islam. When it comes to books on current issues, there are a few considerations the bookstore keeps in mind: that the book “looks decent,” that it “sells,” and that it isn’t “off center from orthodoxy.”

We inquired specifically about their choice to sell *Inside Islam* by Robert Spencer and Daniel Ali, which was featured prominently on an endcap in the store. The rep said that he could only “speculate” about why they started to sell *Inside Islam*, since he wasn’t working there then. But in looking at the book, he gave us a few thoughts about why his predecessor might have started selling it back in 2011. First, he said that the fact that Daniel Ali, one of the authors, is a convert to Catholicism would make the book appealing. Second, the book’s forward is written by Fr. Mitch Pacwa, someone the bookstore is “associated with. The bookstore buys other books and products from him already. Third, the rep said the question and answer format of the book made it appealing as an introductory resource. Looking up the book in their database, he noticed that the item is listed as a featured book in emails from the publisher, Ascension Press. The book is at the top of the “Current Issues” list on their website. “Demand,” the representative explained, is a “big factor” in selling books on current events. He did not express familiarity with the book’s content, or with Robert Spencer, the book’s second author.

The rep also shared with us their store’s sales numbers for *Inside Islam*. Between October 2011 and September 2014, they had sold 240 copies of this book. 56 of those were sold in the first half of 2014. They sell, on average, five to seven, copies of this book per month, a “good” rate, given that this book is on a niche topic.

CATHOLIC INFORMATION CENTER

The Catholic Information Center (CIC), which houses a bookstore and chapel in downtown D.C., sees its mission as “making the Catholic Church alive in the hearts and minds of men and women living and working in our nation’s capital.”

The CIC had several books related to Islam on a shelf near labels like “Judaism” and “African-American Interest.” Some of these were introductory or comparative texts, while others were focused on war and conflict.

- *Crucified Again: Exposing Islam’s New War on Christians* by Raymond Ibrahim
- *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* By John L. Esposito
- *God’s Continent: Christianity, Islam and Europe’s Religious Crisis* by Phillip Jenkins
- *Between Allah and Jesus: What Christians Can Learn from Islam* by Peter Kreeft
- *101 Questions & Answers on Islam* by John Renard
- *West Africa and Islam* by Joseph Kenny, O.P.
- *Faith, Reason, and the War Against Jihadism* by George Weigel
- *The Bible and the Qur’an* by Jacques Jomier

Two books that did not mention a topic related to Islam explicitly in their titles, but rather were about terrorism, were also included in the informal Islam section:

- *Son of Hamas: A Gripping Account of Terror, Betrayal, Political Intrigue, and Unthinkable Choices* by Mosab Hassan Yousef
- *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* by Lawrence Wright

Featured prominently on a shelf above these titles is a book by Robert Spencer not included in our study, titled *Did Muhammad Exist? An Inquiry into Islam’s Obscure Origins*. C.J. McCloskey, the founder of the Catholic Information Center, endorsed another of Spencer’s works, *Not Peace But a Sword* having written a favorable review in *National Catholic Register*.²

A representative of the CIC shared the following with us by email when we inquired in September 2014 about what informs their decision to stock books:

“It is the policy of the Catholic Information Center to carry books and materials in line with the Magisterium of the Church, faithful to her Orthodoxy, and screened to ensure there is no opposition in content to these criterion [sic]. We do carry books by authors who are not Roman Catholic but whose writings are in line as well. Guiding principles for inclusion of these authors and works is the Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate*, especially keeping in mind the part of that document that states:

‘The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. ...[Their teachings] often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women.’

So when I write ‘in line with’ I am referring to writings by authors from or on other religions that contain these rays of truth and through them point the reader to the Truth and to living as a disciple of Christ, whether overtly stated or not.”

PAULINE BOOKS AND MEDIA

Pauline Books and Media is run by the Daughters of St. Paul, and is located in Alexandria, Virginia. They describe their mission as “carry[ing] out a new form of evangelization by living and witnessing to the Faith through communications.”

Their bookstore’s section on ecumenical and interreligious books had the following titles on Islam. They included introductory and comparative texts, books on historical Muslim-Christian encounter, and one about Islam and Christianity in the West today.

- *The Bible and the Qur’an* by Jaques Jomier
- *Christianity, Islam, and Atheism: The Struggle for the Soul of the West* by William Kilpatrick
- *111 Questions on Islam* by Samir Khalil Samir
- *Muslims Ask, Christians Answer* by Christian Troll
- *The Monks of Tibhirine* by John W. Kiser
- *The Saint and the Sultan* by Paul Moses
- A compilation of documents on dialogue put out by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

All but two of these — the Monks of Tibhirine and the PCID compilation — were included in our online research.

We corresponded with one of the sisters who runs the bookstore over email about what informs their decisions about books to sell. This is what she shared with us:

“Our mission is evangelization, and we only carry books that are in line with Catholic teaching. Publishers let our central office know about new titles. Titles are added to our database centrally. If they are on controversial topics, the central office has reviewed them to make sure they are accurate and helpful for our patrons. I choose what books to order for the bookcenter.”

The sister was unable to give us details about books sales from their location.

CONCLUSION

All three Catholic bookstores in the D.C. area offer a mix of materials on Islam, and say that providing an orthodox Catholic perspective is a criterion for the books they sell.

There were a few books that were particularly appealing to bookstores, appearing in all three or at least two of them:

- *The Bible and the Qur'an*, a book by Jacques Jomier published by Ignatius Press, was sold at all three bookstores in the D.C. area. This book was also sold by several Catholic publishers online as well, and has sold more than 20,000 copies since its publication in 2002
- *111 Questions on Islam* by Samir Khalil Samir, was sold at two stores. Samir, a priest and scholar of Middle East Christianity, was an advisor to Pope Benedict XVI.³
- *The Monks of Tibhirine* by John W. Kiser also appeared at two bookstores, as did the compilation of PCID documents.

Two of the Catholic bookstores sell materials from Robert Spencer, the Catholic writer who with Pamela Geller runs an organization considered a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. It is unclear if those running the bookstores are familiar with Spencer's positions and activities.

Catholic bookstores, both in the D.C. area and elsewhere, would do well to reexamine the materials they stock on Islam. Taking a closer look at the message that is being communicated about Islam — and who is communicating it — should be a priority.





Conclusions & Recommendations



In this report, we've shed new light on American Catholic views of Islam, and how Catholic publications — both books and online media outlets — portray the religion and its followers.

Our survey findings reveal that American Catholics are unfamiliar with many of the basics of Islam, and that many are unaware of similarities between the religions. A large minority of Catholics (one-third) have expressly unfavorable views of Muslims, and a majority believe Islam encourages violence more than other religions. These findings provide an in-depth look at American Catholics' views of Islam and dialogue, and can inform Catholic curriculum development and interfaith programming at the parish, diocesan, or national level.

We also found that Catholic media outlets discuss Islam negatively overall. Half of the time Catholic articles use the word “Islamic,” it is in reference to the Islamic State terrorist group. Pope Francis often appears alongside media coverage of Islam, and his appearance in headlines may impact the tone of the message. Outlets that don't mention Pope Francis in their headlines on Islam have the most negative sentiment. We hope this broad

view of Catholic media's treatment of Islam — with glimpses into how specific outlets speak of the religion — will make producers of this content more aware of the picture of Islam and Muslims they're providing their readers. In analyzing for-sale publications, we saw that attempts to introduce Catholics to Islam often focus on differences, while still encouraging dialogue. Among those authors who publish most frequently on Islam for Catholic readers are those who consider Islam a “threat” and “challenge” to Christians.

We also shed light the way the Islamophobia industry sometimes influences the production of Catholic content on Islam. Several individuals with connections to anti-Muslim groups write or appear regularly in Catholic media to discuss Islam as “experts.” Ordinary lay people — as well as Catholic publishers, media outlets, and bookstores — should be aware of writers' connections to Islamophobia, as it would likely impact their decision to publicize or consume that material.



APPENDIX A:

NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL We worked closely with CARA to design our survey, which was conducted by GfK Custom Research (formerly known as Knowledge Networks.) 1,027 self-identified qualified respondents took the survey, which ran from April 9, 2015 to April 15, 2015. The sampling margin of error is ± 3.1 percentage points. The survey was conducted using a sample from Knowledge Panel, GfK's nationally representative, probability-based panel. Panelists completed the survey online.

PRESENTATION OF DATA The data presented represents the views of those who responded to a particular question. Percentages were calculated after excluded those who refused to answer a particular question.

Percentages have been rounded up or down to a full whole number, and in some cases to the tenth of a percentage.

CATHOLIC OUTLETS MENTIONED

Because of our interest in the views of Catholics who frequently consume content from major Catholic media outlets, we asked respondents if they consume a number of specific outlets. To determine this list of outlets that would be included in the poll, we started from a list of the most-visited Catholic websites that CARA compiled for their 2012 study of American Catholic new media use. From that list, we identified the sites related to news and commentary, and included those in our study. This left us with: *America*, *Catholic Answers*, *New Advent*, *National Catholic Reporter*, *National Catholic Register*, *American Catholic*, *Catholic News Agency*, *Catholic News Service*, and *Our Sunday Visitor*. CARA's list included the websites of Catholic universities, religious

orders, social service agencies, Church institutions, UK outlets, and a dating website, which we excluded from our poll.

With CARA's input, we also determined additional Catholic outlets to include in our poll: *Commonweal*, *U.S. Catholic*, *Catholic.org*, *Catholic Culture*, Catholic TV, Ave Maria Radio, Relevant Radio, *Catholic World Report*, *Crisis Magazine*, *Busted Halo*, Patheos Catholic blogs, the Catholic Channel on Sirius XM radio, and Church Militant TV. These represent a diverse swathe of prominent American Catholic publications, television channels, and radio stations.

VIEWS OF MUSLIMS & ISLAM BY

CATHOLIC OUTLET It's important to note that, in some cases, very few respondents to our poll reported that they frequently consumed content from these outlets. Only a few people who took our poll frequently read *America*, for example. This is why the percentages displaying views of Muslims and Islam by outlet (see pg. 45) are broken up so cleanly. Of *America* magazine consumers, for example, 25% view Muslims unfavorably, 50% view Muslims favorably, and 25% say they view Muslims neither positively or negatively. Because of the small number of respondents for some outlets, these resulting percentages should not be taken as widely generalizable. They do, however, highlight interesting trends that warrant further exploration.

These findings demonstrate a correlation (not a causation) between consuming certain outlets and having certain views. We cannot know if consumers of these publications come to these publications with their views already formed, or if reading these outlets has shaped their views in this way. But because of our interest in learning about

Catholics' views and what may shape them, we felt this relationship was important to highlight in the report. Our report reveals more about what Catholics believe about Islam than why they believe it.

VIEWS OF MUSLIMS & ISLAM BY PREFERRED CABLE CHANNEL These findings demonstrate a correlation (not a causation) between consuming certain outlets and having certain views. We cannot know if consumers of these publications come to these publications with their views already formed, or if reading these outlets has shaped their views in this way. But because of our interest in learning about Catholics' views and what may shape them, we felt this relationship was important to highlight in the report. Our report reveals more about what Catholics believe about Islam than why they believe it.

CHAPTER 2

SELECTING OUTLETS CARA, the polling organization we worked with to develop our survey (which is discussed in Chapter 1), provided us with a list of highly Catholic trafficked websites they put together in 2012 as part of a report they did on Catholic new media use (http://www.usccb.org/about/communications/upload/Catholic_New_Media_Use_in_United_States_2012.pdf). We worked from their existing list because of their expert knowledge on Catholic media, and because online content (as opposed to printed publications) was easier to collate. From their list, we identified the U.S.-based news and commentary publications. That meant that we excluded universities' webpages, sites specific to a religious order or diocese, and sites for European Catholic publications, a fraternal group or organizations providing a particular service.

What resulted were several outlets — some of which are published in both print and online, and others of which are exclusively web publications. Two of these resulting outlets, Eternal World Television Network (EWTN) and New Advent, were ultimately excluded from our systematic research — though they had the highest traffic — for separate reasons. EWTN was excluded because its web domain would not run through our content extractor program, and New Advent was excluded because it didn't provide any original content to analyze. They post hyperlinks to articles on others websites.

COLLECTING CONTENT FOR ANALYSIS

To collect content on Islam from these nine sites, we isolated articles with the words "Islam" and "Muslim" in the body of the article that were published between October 1, 2014 and September 30, 2015. To do this, we had a two-step process. First, we searched for "Islam" and "Muslim" (and their stems) in each Catholic site through Google's "site search" function. What resulted were urls with the words "Islam" or "Muslim" somewhere on the page. This Google function omits "very similar entries," and that exclusion was maintained in our study. Next, we used a custom content extractor, which allowed us to weed out the urls gathered by Google that lacked "Islam" or "Muslim" in the body of the article text specifically. This extractor pulled the resulting urls from each site into a spreadsheet, with the titles, dates, authors, and body of the article organized into columns. From there, we were able to feed the titles, or the article body, into Nvivo, a content analysis software, for analysis.

TOP WORDS IN HEADLINES To determine the top words used in headlines of Catholic articles on Islam, we fed the titles of all the articles into Nvivo and ran a word frequency query, allowing stemmed words to be grouped together. The words, “Catholic,” “Christian,” “Islam” and “Muslim” were excluded, because they are give-aways with this topic.

“POPE FRANCIS” IN HEADLINES We searched for “Pope Francis” and “Pope” in the headlines of each outlet. To determine the frequency of his mention, relative to the number of articles published by each outlet, we divided the total number of references of the pope by the total number of articles by each outlet.

TOP WORDS IN TWEETS Using Twitter’s advanced search function, we compiled Tweets containing “Islam” or “Muslim” shared by the nine outlets during our determined timeframe: October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015. Then using Nvivo’s word search query, we determined the most frequently used words in Tweets across all nine outlets. For this query, words like “article” and “post” were excluded, since they were used in the context of advertising new pieces, and didn’t relate to the content itself. “Muslim,” “Islam,” “Catholics” and “Christians” were also added to the stop words list as usual.

DETERMINING TOPIC REFERENCES

Here we explain our justifications choosing to track the appearance of the following topics or words:

Islamic State: We were curious to see how often terrorist groups came up in discussions of Islam in Catholic outlets. We decided to look at ISIS specifically — as opposed to other Muslim militant groups — because according to Google Trends it was the most discussed terrorist group during the time period of the study.

Persecution of Christians: We had noticed anecdotally that Christian persecution under ISIS, or at the hands of other Muslim groups, was a topic that often came up in Catholic outlets. We wanted to know which outlets referenced it most often.

Interfaith activities and Muslim-Christian dialogue: We wanted to know which outlet more often brought up interfaith topics, especially when it involved Muslims and Catholics. In the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and in the Catechism, the Church has explained that dialogue with those of other faiths is important. Pope Francis has also prioritized dialogue with Muslims.

Islamophobia: Because of our focus on anti-Muslim prejudice and discrimination at the Bridge Initiative, we were curious to know which outlet covered Islamophobia the most.

Violence committed by Muslims: In secular news media, Islam is very often mentioned in the content of violence committed by terrorist groups like ISIS. We wanted to know which Catholic outlet brought up this violence the most.

Islam and politics: In secular media, the topic of “political Islam” comes up frequently. We wanted to know if certain Catholic outlets discussed sharia — what is commonly known as Islamic law — and Islamism more than others.

Evangelization: Lastly, we wanted to include evangelization as a topic to explore across outlets. For Catholics, this means “sharing the Good News” or the Gospel with others. We wanted to know if one outlet mentions this topic more than others.

We also chose to include searches of particular words in this portion of our study. Here we explain each of those decisions:

“Dialogue”: Dialogue is the preferred word the Church uses when talking about interreligious relations, so we wanted to know which outlets use it most.

“Mercy/merciful”: We were interested in “mercy” and “merciful” because mercy is a central aspect in Islam, and is mentioned as such in *Nostra Aetate*. We are curious to see how often mercy comes up in the context of Islam, even before the Year of Mercy, when it became a more central focus of Catholics. (Pope Francis did speak frequently of mercy before the Jubilee as well, during the time of the study.)

“Peace,” “Justice,” “War”: The Church has acknowledged in its documents about dialogue that Catholics and Muslims together can help bring about peace and justice, and end war.

“Nostra Aetate”: We also were curious if one outlet mentions the Vatican II document about interfaith relations, *Nostra Aetate*, more than others.

Though word frequency searches cannot give us a sense of the full context of the words in each article, the increased frequency in one outlet over another can give us a sense that these words are being associated with Islam more strongly. We recognize, however, that sometimes these terms could be used sarcastically by writers. This could be the case with “peace,” for example, which in some secular media is brought up frequently in the conversations about whether or not “Islam is a religion of peace.”]

COMPILING TOPIC REFERENCES

To identify the many times these topics were mentioned, we used numerous search terms related to that topic. These results were then added together, resulting in a unique total of references for each outlet. Here we describe the search terms we used to identify each topic, and the justifications for them:

Islamic State: Because the Islamic State is referred to by many names and acronyms, we searched for “Islamic State,” “ISIS,” “ISIL,” “Daesh,” and “Daish.” We didn’t need to include the longer version “Islamic State of Iraq and Syria,” for example, because that phrase resulted in searches of just “Islamic State.”

Christian persecution: To determine the most common constructions used to describe persecution of Christians, we fed several potential phrases into Google Trends. “Christian persecution” and “persecution of Christians” were used far more often during the period of the study (mid 2014 to mid 2015) than other options: “Christian genocide,” “Christian martyrs/martyrdom,” “Christian victims” and “anti-Christian persecution.” We realize that only using these two search terms probably did not catch every reference, since reporting on Christian persecution could often use different or more incident-specific language.

Interfaith activities and Muslim-Christian relations:

To cover the diverse references to interfaith dialogue in general and Muslim-Christian dialogue in particular, we used the following search terms: “Muslim-Christian relations,” and “Muslim-Christian dialogue,” which are commonly used in academia; “Catholic-Muslim relations” and “Catholic-Muslim dialogue,” which are frequently used in Catholic Church contexts; “interfaith,” which is frequently used in the United States by those bringing together people of different faiths; “interreligious” or “inter-religious” which are used as substitutes for “interfaith” in Catholic circles. We considered using “multi-faith” also, but excluded it because of its low usage online, according to Google Trends.

Islamophobia: To measure the frequency of the topic Islamophobia, we chose to use the terms “anti-Muslim” and “anti-Islam,” which were the most commonly used on Google Trends during the time period of our study. We excluded other phrases we tested in Google Trends: “prejudice towards Muslims,” “discrimination against Muslims” and “anti-Islamic.” We also used the word “Islamophobia” since that’s how we frame the issue at the Bridge Initiative and were curious about if and how Catholic outlets use the word.

Violence committed by Muslims: We identified a number of search terms to help us locate these references. Often, Muslims' connections to violence are not stated explicitly, but indicated implicitly based on the word used. As is argued in the book, *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation after 9/11*, "terrorism" is usually used to speak out violence committed by Muslims, rather than as a tactic of violence. Numerous articles, like these two published in the Washington Post in recent years, also make this case. (See <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/06/15/the-problem-with-the-way-we-talk-and-write-about-muslims-and-terrorism/> and https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/in-the-news-media-are-muslims-the-only-terrorists/2014/06/10/9ee01778-f0d9-11e3-9ebc-2ee6f81ed217_story.html.) Thus, we chose to include the words "terror," "terrorism," and "terrorist(s)" as search terms. We also used "extremism" and "extremist(s)" as search terms. A study recently published by American Friends Service Committee demonstrated that "violent extremism" is a term usually used to talk about Muslims. Lastly, we included words related to jihad, which in common parlance has come to mean violence committed in the name of Islam. (See <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30411519>.) Thus, we included "jihadi(s)," "jihadist(s)," "jihad," "jihadism." We chose to exclude the following words, which came up lower than these other search terms in Google Trends during the time period we looked at: "radical," "radicalization," "radicalism," "militant(s)," "fundamentalist," and "fundamentalism."

Islam and politics: To gauge the association of Islam and politics, we used these words: "Islamism" and "Islamist," which describe political movements that seek to infuse government with religious ideas and principles; "political ideology" and "Islamic political system," phrases often used when talking about Islam and politics

to argue that Islam isn't a religion; "political Islam," which is sometimes used as a synonym for Islamism; and "sharia/shari'a/shariah," which is often brought up in discussions about Islamic law and politics.

Evangelization: To determine common words and phrases that Catholics use to talk about conversion, we looked at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishop's Evangelization page to come up with word formulations. We then put these terms in a basic Google search to see if results from other Catholic websites came up. Thus, we used, "evangelize," "evangelization," "evangelizing," "bring(ing) good news;" "proclaim(ing) the gospel;" "witness(ing) to the faith," which is used in Church documents; "share(ing) the faith;" and "go (forth) and make disciples." We excluded words like "proselytize" and "convert/conversion," which we have noticed anecdotally are not preferred by or used less than the other phrases we did include.

To track specific words like "mercy" and "war" across the outlets, we simply did searches for these words and their stems in each outlet's articles.

COMPARING OUTLETS BY TOPIC

After compiling the total number of references to each topic in each outlet, we compared the references across outlets. We could not simply compare the raw numbers from one outlet to another, since some outlets published close to 200 articles during our timeframe, while others published less than a dozen. So we divided the number of references to each topic by the number of articles from each outlet to generate ratios that we could compare. This allowed us to see how often a topic was referenced in one outlet relative to another.

DETERMINING SENTIMENT & EMOTION IN HEADLINES

To determine the sentiment and emotion of headlines of articles about Islam, we fed them into AlchemyLanguage API, a free text analysis tool from IBM's

Watson Developer Cloud (<https://alchemy-language-demo.mybluemix.net/>). This online tool uses data from billions of webpages to uncover text sentiment, emotion, concepts, keywords, and other information about a block of text input by the user. We had the API analyze the headlines from all nine outlets together, and provide an overall sentiment and emotion score. We then went through the same process for each outlet's headlines.

CHAPTER 3

LOCATING CATHOLIC PUBLISHERS' RESOURCES ON ISLAM

To tackle the question of how Islam and Muslims are portrayed and discussed in these for-sale Catholic resources, we needed to locate the materials that Catholic publishers were selling. The following criteria was used to determine the items included in our study:

- We included items published by **American Catholic publishing companies** (excluding Catholic university presses). Some publishers were initially located through existing online lists of Catholic presses, and additional publishers were added through snowballing web searches. After coming across publishers, we confirmed that they are based out of the U.S. and that they state explicitly on their website their affiliation with a Catholic religious order, or make clear that Catholicism animates or impact their publishing. Large online Catholic vendors, like Catholic Company, were excluded from this study.
- Once we determined this group of publishers, we conducted searches of "Islam" and "Muslim" in the publishers' online stores to bring up items that dealt with Muslims and/or their religion. The resulting print materials, audio programs, and DVDs were included in our study if their title, subtitle, or online description indicated that **Islam was a significant topic** that served the item's larger argument. For example, a reference to the Muslim poet Rumi in the description of a

book of world prayers, or a mention of a battle involving the Ottomans, warranted an item's inclusion in our study. Of course, books with a more central focus around Islam were also included. Academic books that came up in these searches, if they were not centrally related to Islam, were excluded, as were items from the Classics of Western Spirituality series published by Paulist Press.

- Our study excluded resources that were outside the bounds of our pre-determined time frame. If an item was **published between September 11, 2001 and September 2014** (when initial research for this report began), or, if an item was published before 9/11/2001 but was still being sold in September 2014, it was included in our research. It is also important to note that the items sold on these various publishers' websites in 2016 may no longer reflect what came up in our searches in fall 2014, when the study was initiated. The books included in our study are those that were sold in fall 2014.

Select books that did not fit into this criteria were also included, if they were known to the research team to be a book on Islam from a Catholic perspective. This included several books published by Catholic publishers that didn't emerge using the search terms "Islam" and "Muslims": *The Saint and the Sultan: The Crusades, Islam, and Francis of Assisi's Mission of Peace* by Paul Moses; *Abba and Allah: The Difference It Makes* by Scott Hahn; *Dangers to the Faith: Recognizing Catholicism's 21st Century Opponents* by Al Kresta; and *The Bible and the Qur'an: Their Differing Depictions of Jesus and the Holy Spirit* by Mitch Pacwa) Also included were two books that were published by non-Catholic publishers, but written by Catholic authors: *Between Allah and Jesus: What Catholics Can Learn From Muslims* by Peter Kreeft and *Islam Is...An Experience of Dialogue and Devotion* by Sr. Mary Margaret Funk.

TOP TEN WORDS IN ALL RESOURCE

TITLES We fed the titles of all the materials into Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis software, and ran a word frequency query that showed us the words used most. We had Nvivo group together “stemmed” words, meaning, for example that “dialogue,” in the singular, and “dialogues” in the plural, were treated as one word. Words from Nvivo’s pre-programmed “Stop Words” list were excluded from the query, as were “Catholic,” “Christian,” “Islam,” “Muslim” and words that derive from these words, like “Christians” plural.) We identified the top stemmed ten words used, including all those tied for tenth.

TOP TEN WORDS IN INTRODUCTORY AND COMPARATIVE RESOURCE

TITLES Again we ran a word frequency query, excluding Nvivo’s usual stop words, along with “Catholic,” “Christian,” “Islam,” “Muslim,” and the authors’ names (which occasionally appeared in a subtitle.) We identified the top stemmed ten words used, including all those tied for tenth.

TOP TEN WORDS IN DESCRIPTIONS OF INTRODUCTORY AND COMPARATIVE

MATERIALS Using the resources’ online descriptions and introduction or opening chapter, we identified where the author explicitly summarizes what the publication is about and what it tries to do. These descriptions were fed into Nvivo (including duplicates in language, if they occurred.) Some materials didn’t provide explicit summaries of their purpose, in which case no content from those materials were included. We conducted a word frequency search of these descriptions in Nvivo, leaving out the typical Nvivo stop words as well as the stemmed words of the following: “Islam,” “Muslim,” “Christian,” “Catholic,” and “book.” Also excluded were author names and verbs about the presentation of the material.

DETERMINING SENTIMENT AND EMOTION OF RESOURCE TITLES

To determine the titles’ sentiment, we fed the titles of all materials into AlchemyLanguage API, a free text analysis tool we describe in the Chapter 2 methodology above. We had this API analyze all the titles together, and provide an overall sentiment and emotion score. We went through the same process for the subset of titles from introductory and comparative materials on Islam.

APPENDIX B:

FINDINGS ON SPECIFIC CATHOLIC OUTLETS

America Magazine was the outlet that most often referenced the Islamic State, interfaith activities, Islamophobia, the word “peace,” and the word “war.” America’s headlines about Islam were the least negative; *American Catholic*, however, had a positive sentiment score. Compared to the other outlets, America had the highest percentage of frequent readers who say they have favorable view of Muslims.

American Catholic, which was the only outlet to have overall positive sentiment — and joy as the primary emotion — in its headlines, was the outlet that most often brought up the topic of mercy and the word “justice.” Compared to the other outlets, *American Catholic* published the fewest number of articles on Islam and Muslims over the year period. Frequent readers of this site were most likely to report unfavorable views of Muslims than readers of these other outlets.

Catholic Culture had the most negative sentiment in its headlines. Compared to the survey respondents who are readers of other outlets, Catholic Culture’s readers had the highest levels of uncertainty about their feelings towards Muslims, and about whether or not Islam encourages violence more than other religions.

Catholic Answers’ headlines were the second most negative. Catholic Answers was also the outlet that had the highest rate of referencing violence committed by Muslims in its articles. It was also the outlet to most often bring up evangelization.

Catholic Answers and **Catholic Culture**, which referenced Pope Francis the *least* in their headlines about Islam, were also the outlets which published headlines with the most negative sentiment. These two outlets also had the highest web traffic when CARA measured it in 2012.

Catholic News Agency was the outlet that published the most content on Islam and Muslims (with 198 unique urls in the year-long period). Compared to these other nine outlets, Catholic News Agency also had the highest percentage of frequent readers who say that Islam is more likely than other religions to encourage violence.

Catholic News Service was the outlet most likely to bring up Islam and politics. They were the outlet to most frequently bring up the word “shariah.”

National Catholic Reporter was the outlet to most frequently use the word “dialogue” in its articles about Islam and Muslims.

National Catholic Register and **National Catholic Reporter**, which are seen by many Catholics as on opposite sides of the political spectrum, had almost identical levels of negativity in their article headlines on Islam.

Our Sunday Visitor was the outlet to most frequently bring up anti-Christian persecution and to use the phrase “Nostra Aetate,” which is the title of the Vatican II document on other religions.

APPENDIX C:

RESOURCES ON ISLAM FROM CATHOLIC PUBLISHERS, ORGANIZED ALPHABETICALLY BY PUBLISHER

Title	Author/presenter	Original publisher	Category
<i>Prayers from Around the World and Across the Ages</i>	Victor M. Parachin	ACTA Publications	Spirituality and Prayer
<i>Inside Islam: A Guide for Catholics</i>	Robert Spencer, Daniel Ali	Ascension Press	Introduction to Islam
<i>Stages on the Road</i>	Singrid Undset	Ave Marie Press	(Auto)biography
<i>Fragments of Your Ancient Name</i>	Joyce Rupp	Ave Marie Press	Spirituality and Prayer
<i>God Hunger: Discovering the Mystic in All of Us</i>	John Kirvan	Ave Marie Press	Spirituality and Prayer
<i>Raw Faith: Nurturing the Believer in All of Us</i>	John Kirvan	Ave Marie Press	Spirituality and Prayer
<i>Exploring the Religions of Our World</i>	Nancy Clemmons, SNJM	Ave Marie Press	Textbook
<i>Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross</i>	Norman Geisler, Abdul Saleeb	Baker Book Company*	Apologetics
<i>Not Peace But a Sword: The Great Chasm Between Islam and Christianity</i>	Robert Spencer	Catholic Answers	Comparative
<i>Lepanto: The Battle that Saved the West</i>	Christopher Check	Catholic Answers	History
<i>The Real Story of the Crusades</i>	Steve Weidenkopf	Catholic Answers	History
<i>Islam: A Catholic Perspective</i>	Catholic Answers Staff	Catholic Answers	Introduction to Islam
<i>The Future of Catholicism</i>	Michael Coren	Catholic Answers	The Church and the Modern World
<i>Explaining Islam: Islam from a Catholic Perspective</i>	Jeremy M. Gaskill	Catholic Truth Society	Introduction to Islam
<i>The Journey Home</i>	Marcus Grodi	EWTN Religious Catalogue	(Auto)biography
<i>Catholic Aid to Syria's Refugees</i>	Elisabetta Valgiusti	EWTN Religious Catalogue	The Church and the Modern World
<i>Pakistan's Christians</i>	n/a	EWTN Religious Catalogue	The Church and the Modern World
<i>The Holy Land with Peter Vasko</i>	Peter Vasko	EWTN Religious Catalogue	The Church and the Modern World
<i>The Suffering Church: Seasons 1 and 2</i>	Lord David Alton	EWTN Religious Catalogue	The Church and the Modern World
<i>St. John Damascene Diacttica</i>	Edited by Owen A Colligan	Franciscan Institute Publications	(Auto)biography
<i>Daring to Embrace the Other (Spirit and Life Series)</i>	Multiple authors	Franciscan Institute Publications	St. Francis and Islam
<i>Francis and Islam</i>	J. Hoebrichts	Franciscan Institute Publications	St. Francis and Islam
<i>Islam and Franciscanism: A Dialogue</i>	Edited by Daniel Dwyer, OFM, and Hugh Hines, OFM	Franciscan Institute Publications	St. Francis and Islam

Title	Author/presenter	Original publisher	Category
<i>Mirroring One Another, Reflecting the Divine: The Franciscan-Muslim Journey Into God (Spirit and Life Series)</i>	Multiple authors	Franciscan Institute Publications	St. Francis and Islam
<i>Do We Worship the Same God?: Comparing the Bible and the Qur'an</i>	George Dardess	Franciscan Media: Servant Books	Comparative
<i>In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan: A Model for Peacemaking</i>	Kathleen Warren OSF, Jayasri (Joyce) Hart	Franciscan Media: Servant Books	St. Francis and Islam
<i>A Refutation of Moral Relativism</i>	Peter Kreeft	Ignatius Press	Apologetics
<i>The Price to Pay</i>	Joseph Fadelle	Ignatius Press	(Auto)biography
<i>The Bible and the Qur'an</i>	Fr. Jacques Jomier	Ignatius Press	Comparative
<i>Kabul 24</i>	n/a	Ignatius Press	Drama (Film)
<i>Of Gods and Men</i>	n/a	Ignatius Press	Drama (Film)
<i>Poor Banished Children</i>	Fiorella De Maria	Ignatius Press	Drama (Film)
<i>Lepanto</i>	Edited by Dale Ahlquist	Ignatius Press	History
<i>111 Questions on Islam: Samir Khalil Samir S.J. on Islam and the West</i>	Samir Khalil Samir, SJ	Ignatius Press	Introduction to Islam
<i>Ceremony of Innocence: A Novel</i>	Dorothy Cummings McLean	Ignatius Press	Novel
<i>Christianity, Islam, and Atheism: The Struggle for the Soul of the West</i>	William Kilpatrick	Ignatius Press	The Church and the Modern World
<i>The Regensburg Lecture</i>	Jospeh Schall, SJ	Ignatius Press	The Church and the Modern World
<i>Christianity and Islam: Are We at War?</i>	Mitch Pacwa	Ignatius Productions	Comparative
<i>Islam & Christianity</i>	Mitch Pacwa and Daniel Ali	Ignatius Productions	Comparative
<i>The Bible and the Qur'an: Their Differing Depictions of Jesus and the Holy Spirit</i>	Mitch Pacwa	Ignatius Productions	Comparative
<i>Our Lady, the Eucharist and Islam</i>	Mitch Pacwa	Ignatius Productions	Shared Heritage
<i>Beliefnet Guide to Islam</i>	Hesham A. Hassaballa, Kabir Helminski	Image Publishing (A Division of Random House)	Introduction to Islam
<i>The Saint and the Sultan</i>	Paul Moses	Image Publishing (A Division of Random House)	St. Francis and Islam
<i>Between Allah and Jesus: What Christians Can Learn from Muslims</i>	Peter Kreeft	Intervarsity Press*	Comparative

Title	Author/presenter	Original publisher	Category
<i>What Catholics Should Know About Islam</i>	Sandra Toenis Keating	Knights of Columbus Catholic Information Service	Introduction to Islam
<i>Islam Is... An Experience of Dialogue and Devotion</i>	Mary Margaret Funk, OSB	Lantern Books*	Introduction to Islam
<i>Abba or Allah: Important Differences Between Catholicism and Islam</i>	Scott Hahn	Lighthouse Catholic Media	Comparative
<i>Islam: What Catholics Should Know</i>	Mary Margaret Funk, OSB	Liguori Press	Introduction to Islam
<i>What Catholics Should Know About Islam</i>	Fr. Vincent Heier	Liguori Press	Introduction to Islam
<i>How Far to Follow: The Martyrs of Atlas</i>	Bernardo Olivera OCSO	Liturgical Press	(Auto)biography
<i>Ishmael Instructs Isaac: An Introduction to the Qur'an for Bible Readers</i>	John Kaltner	Liturgical Press	Comparative
<i>Monks and Muslims: Creating Communities of Friendship</i>	Edited by Mohammad Ali Shomali and William Skudlarek	Liturgical Press	Dialogue
<i>Monks and Muslims: Monastic and Shi'a Spirituality in Dialogue</i>	Edited by Mohammad Ali Shomali and William Skudlarek, OSB	Liturgical Press	Dialogue
<i>Islam Considered: A Christian View</i>	Margot Patterson	Liturgical Press	Introduction to Islam
<i>Christian de Cherge: A Theology of Hope</i>	Christian Saleson	Liturgical Press	Philo/Theo
<i>Rachel Weeping: Jews, Christians, and Muslims at the Fortress Tomb</i>	Fred Strickert	Liturgical Press	Shared Heritage
<i>Ten Thousand Faces of the Virgin Mary</i>	George Tavard	Liturgical Press	Shared Heritage
<i>Women of Bible Lands: A Pilgrimage to Compassion and Wisdom</i>	Martha Ann Kirk, CCVI	Liturgical Press	Shared Heritage
<i>No Peace Without Prayer: Encouraging Muslims and Christians to Pray Together: A Benedictine Approach</i>	Abbot Timothy Wright	Liturgical Press	Spirituality and Prayer
<i>Sharing Sacred Space</i>	Benoît Standaert	Liturgical Press	Spirituality and Prayer
<i>Islam: What Catholics Need to Know</i>	Rev. Elias D. Mallon, PhD	National Catholic Education Association	Introduction to Islam
<i>Muslims Ask, Christians Answer</i>	Christian Troll, SJ	New City Press	Christianity from a Muslim Perspective

Title	Author/presenter	Original publisher	Category
<i>Building Bridges</i>	Francis Cardinal Arinze	New City Press	Dialogue
<i>A Life Poured Out: Pierre Claverie of Algeria</i>	Jean-Jacques Parnenes	Orbis	(Auto)biography
<i>Dialogue of Life: A Christian Among Allah's Poor</i>	Bob McCahill	Orbis	(Auto)biography
<i>The Gospel of Rutba: War, Peace, and the Good Samaritan Story in Iraq</i>	Greg Barrett	Orbis	(Auto)biography
<i>A Muslim Looks at Christianity</i>	Mahmood Ayoud, edited by Irfan Omar	Orbis	Christianity from a Muslim Perspective
<i>Christianity Through Non-Christian Eyes</i>	Edited by Paul J Griffiths	Orbis	Christianity from a Muslim Perspective
<i>A Christian View of Islam: Essays on Dialogue</i>	Thomas Michel and Irfan Omar	Orbis	Comparative
<i>The Mission and Death of Jesus in Islam and Christianity</i>	A.H. Mathias Zahniser	Orbis	Comparative
<i>Dialogue and Difference: Clarity in Muslim-Christian Relations</i>	Christian Troll, SJ	Orbis	Dialogue
<i>My Neighbor's Faith: Stories of Interreligious Encounter, Growth, and Transformation</i>	Jennifer Howe Peace (Author), Or Rose (Author), Gregory Mobley	Orbis	Dialogue
<i>A World of Prayer</i>	Rosalind Bradley	Orbis	Spirituality and Prayer
<i>In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan: Catholics and Muslims Working Together for the Common Good</i>	George Dardess and Marvin L. Krier	Orbis	St. Francis and Islam
<i>Understanding Other Religious Worlds: A Guide for Religious Education</i>	Judith A Berling	Orbis	Textbook
<i>Dangers to the Faith: Recognizing Catholicism's 21st-Century Opponents</i>	Al Kresta	Our Sunday Visitor	Apologetics
<i>Meeting Islam: A Guide for Catholics</i>	George Dardess	Paraclete Press	Introduction to Islam
<i>A Catalogue of Angels: The Heavenly, the Fallen, and the Holy Ones Among Us</i>	Vinita Hampton Wright	Paraclete Press	Shared Heritage
<i>99 Psalms</i>	Said	Paraclete Press	Spirituality and Prayer
<i>My Muslim Friend</i>	Donna Jean Kemmetmueller, FSP	Pauline Publishing House	Children's books
<i>Christian Hermit in an Islamic World: Muslim's View of Charles de Foucauld</i>	Ali Merad	Paulist Press	(Auto)biography

Title	Author/presenter	Original publisher	Category
<i>Christian Martyrs for a Muslim People: Nineteen Lives Given, 19 Lives Shared</i>	Martin McGhee, OSB	Paulist Press	(Auto)biography
<i>The Scimitar and the Veil: Extraordinary Women of Islam</i>	Jennifer Heath	Paulist Press	(Auto)biography
<i>God, Yahweh, Allah</i>	Katia Mrowiec; Michel Kubler and Antoine Sfeir	Paulist Press	Children's books
<i>101 Questions & Answers on Islam</i>	John Renard	Paulist Press	Introduction to Islam
<i>Christian Mysticism East and West: What the Masters Teach Us</i>	Maria Joaudi	Paulist Press	Shared Heritage
<i>Christian and Islamic Spirituality: Sharing a Journey</i>	Maria Joaudi	Paulist Press	Spirituality and Prayer
<i>Beginning Apologetics 9: How to Answer Muslims</i>	Jim Burnham	San Juan Catholic Seminars	Apologetics
<i>Blood Red Crescent</i>	Henry Garnett	Scepter Publishers	Children's books
<i>Islam at the Gates</i>	Diane Moczar	Scepter Publishers	History
<i>A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation</i>	St. Thomas More	Scepter Publishers	Novel
<i>Francis of Assisi</i>	Michael De La Bedoyere	Scepter Publishers	St. Francis and Islam
<i>All Roads</i>	Dale Ahlquist	St. Benedict's Press/TAN Books	Apologetics
<i>The Great Heresies</i>	Hillarie Belloc	St. Benedict's Press/TAN Books	Apologetics
<i>Isabella of Spain: The Last Crusader (1451-1504)</i>	William Thomas Walsh	St. Benedict's Press/TAN Books	(Auto)biography
<i>Seven Lies About Catholic History: Infamous Myths about the Church's Past and How to Answer Them</i>	Diane Moczar	St. Benedict's Press/TAN Books	History
<i>The Crusades</i>	Hillarie Belloc	St. Benedict's Press/TAN Books	History
<i>Mary's House in Ephesus</i>	Rev Carl G Schulte CM	St. Benedict's Press/TAN Books	Shared Heritage
<i>St. Francis of Assisi and the Conversion of the Muslims</i>	Frank M. Rega	St. Benedict's Press/TAN Books	St. Francis and Islam
<i>Defying Death: Muslims Come Home to Christ</i>	Zakaria Botros	St. Joseph Communications	Apologetics
<i>Stand Up for Your Faith</i>	Scott Hahn	St. Joseph Communications	Apologetics
<i>Witness the Gospel to Muslims by Fr. Zakaria Botros</i>	Zakaria Botros	St. Joseph Communications	Apologetics
<i>Critical Questions Between Islam and Christianity</i>	Jesse Romero, Terry Barber, Robert Spencer	St. Joseph Communications	Comparative
<i>Islam and Christianity</i>	Marcus Barber	St. Joseph Communications	Comparative

Title	Author/presenter	Original publisher	Category
<i>Fire and Sword: The Crusades</i>	Matthew Arnold, Jesse Romero, M.A., and Edmund Mazza, PhD	St. Joseph Communications	History
<i>The Dark Ages: Church History II</i>	Dr. Edmund Mazza	St. Joseph Communications	History
<i>Islam Exposed: The Crescent in Light of the Cross</i>	Tim Staples	St. Joseph Communications	Introduction to Islam
<i>Sharia Law Exposed</i>	Jesse Romero	St. Joseph Communications	Specific Treatments
<i>Un-Holy War: Catholic Reflections on Islam</i>	Scott Hahn	St. Joseph Communications	The Church and the Modern World
<i>Encounters in Faith: Christianity in Interreligious Dialogue</i>	Peter Feldmeier	St. Mary's Press	Textbook
<i>Moral Traditions: An Introduction to World Religious Ethics</i>	Mari Rapela Heidt	St. Mary's Press	Textbook
<i>Primary Source Readings in World religions</i>	Jeffrey Brodd	St. Mary's Press	Textbook
<i>Teaching about Other Religions: Ideas and Strategies for Use in the Catholic High School</i>	Jonathan Yu-Phelps	St. Mary's Press	Textbook
<i>Teaching Manual for World Religions</i>	Michael Wilt and Jonathan Yu-Phelps	St. Mary's Press	Textbook
<i>Triologue: Jews, Christians, & Muslims in Dialogue</i>	Leonard Swidler, Reuven Firestone, and Khalid Duran	Twenty Third Publications	Dialogue
<i>The Human Quest for God</i>	Joseph Stoutzenberger	Twenty Third Publications	Textbook
<i>World Religions and Contemporary Issues: How Evolving Views on Ecology, Peace, and Women are Impacting Faith Today</i>	Brennan R. Hill, PhD	Twenty Third Publications	Textbook
<i>Catholics and Muslims: Friends or Adversaries?</i>	Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs	USCCB Publishing	Introduction to Islam
<i>Understanding Islam: A Guide for Christian Educators</i>	Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs	USCCB Publishing	Introduction to Islam
<i>Catholic Evangelization in an Ecumenical and Interreligious Society</i>	Committee for Evangelization; Various authors	USCCB Publishing	Pastoral
<i>Interreligious Prayer</i>	Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs	USCCB Publishing	Pastoral
<i>The Challenge of Catholic-Muslim Marriage: A Pastoral Resource</i>	Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs	USCCB Publishing	Pastoral
<i>Welcoming the Stranger Parish Guide: Unity in Diversity</i>	n/a	USCCB Publishing	Pastoral

APPENDIX D:

RESOURCES ON ISLAM FROM CATHOLIC PUBLISHERS, WITH NOTES ABOUT COPIES SOLD, AND STATED GOALS

Title	Author	Year Original publisher	Copies sold	Category	Stated goals, intended impact on readers
<i>Inside Islam: A Guide for Catholics</i>	Robert Spencer, Daniel Ali	2003 Ascension Press	Retracted	Islam 101	Readers become better Christians/ grasp faith; Readers witness/evangelize/ guide or bring Muslims to the faith; Learn about “deficiencies”
<i>Not Peace But a Sword: The Great Chasm Between Islam and Christianity</i>	Robert Spencer	2013 Catholic Answers	7,500 as of Sept. 2014	Comparative	“...to generate more light than heat, but are heated corrective to media portrayals
<i>Islam: A Catholic Perspective</i>	Catholic Answers Staff	? Catholic Answers	20,000 as of Sept. 2014	Islam 101	Motivation for dialogue/encounters/ reconciliation/peace/ mutual understanding; Readers will witness/ evangelize/guide or bring Muslims to the faith
<i>Explaining Islam: Islam from a Catholic Perspective</i>	Jeremy M. Gaskill	2003 Catholic Truth Society	2,675 as of Oct. 2014 (Sales from Ignatius Press only)	Islam 101	No explicit statement of goals
<i>Do We Worship the Same God?: Comparing the Bible and the Qur'an</i>	George Dardess	2006 Franciscan Media: Servant Books	No response	Comparative	Motivation for dialogue/encounters/ reconciliation/peace/ mutual understanding; Reader will judge/ discern/decide about Islam for oneself
<i>The Bible and the Qur'an</i>	Fr. Jacques Jomier	2002 Ignatius Press	23,247 as of Oct. 2014	Comparative	Motivation for dialogue/encounters/ reconciliation/peace/ Defend the faith, “face Islam”
<i>111 Questions on Islam: Samir Khalil Samir S.J. on Islam and the West</i>	Samir Khalil Samir, SJ	2008 Ignatius Press	5,410, as of Oct. 2014	Islam 101	Understand Middle East, news, Muslims; Motivation for dialogue/encounters/ reconciliation/peace/ mutual understanding; Reader will judge/ discern/decide about Islam for oneself; “Helping people engage in a profound reflection from a double point of view: that of history and that of modernity”

Title	Author	Year Original publisher	Copies sold	Category	Stated goals, intended impact on readers
<i>Christianity and Islam: Are We at War?</i>	Mitch Pacwa	? Ignatius Productions	No response	Comparative	No explicit statement of goals
<i>Islam & Christianity</i>	Mitch Pacwa and Daniel Ali	? Ignatius Productions	No response	Comparative	Motivation for dialogue/encounters/reconciliation/peace/mutual understanding; Readers will witness/evangelize/guide or bring Muslims to the faith
<i>The Bible and the Qur'an: Their Differing Depictions of Jesus and the Holy Spirit</i>	Mitch Pacwa	? Ignatius Productions	No response	Comparative	Motivation for dialogue/encounters/reconciliation/peace/mutual understanding; Readers become better Christians/grasp faith
<i>Beliefnet Guide to Islam</i>	Hesham A. Hassaballa, Kabir Helminski	2006 Image Publishing (A Division of Random House)	Refused	Islam 101	Reader will judge/discern/decide about Islam for oneself; Take readers into the heart of this global religion
<i>Between Allah and Jesus: What Christians Can Learn from Muslims</i>	Peter Kreeft	2010 Intervarsity Press	10,000-25,000 as of Oct. 2014	Comparative	Understand Middle East, news, Muslims; Readers become better Christians/grasp faith; Make Christians envious of Muslims' commitment to their religion and "provoke jealousy"
<i>What Catholics Should Know About Islam</i>	Sandra Toenis Keating	2008 Knights of Columbus Catholic Information Service	No response	Islam 101	Live out Church teaching
<i>Islam Is... An Experience of Dialogue and Devotion</i>	Mary Margaret Funk, OSB	2003, Second Edition 2008 Lantern Books	2,100 as of July 2016	Islam 101	Offer a way of viewing Islam that is "honest and authentic"
<i>Abba or Allah: Important Differences Between Catholicism and Islam</i>	Scott Hahn	? Lighthouse Catholic Media	Refused	Comparative	No explicit statement of goals

Title	Author	Year Original publisher	Copies sold	Category	Stated goals, intended impact on readers
<i>Islam: What Catholics Should Know</i>	Mary Margaret Funk, OSB	Liguori Press	101,668 as of Sept. 2014	Islam 101	No explicit statement of goals
<i>What Catholics Should Know About Islam</i>	Fr. Vincent Heier	2005 Liguori Press	Low five figures, as of Oct. 2015	Islam 101	No explicit statement of goals
<i>Ishmael Instructs Isaac: An Introduction to the Qur'an for Bible Readers</i>	John Kaltner	1999 Liturgical Press	2,744 as of Sept. 2014	Comparative	Motivation for dialogue/encounters/reconciliation/peace/mutual understanding; Readers learn about differences; Readers appreciate, identify similarities
<i>Islam Considered: A Christian View</i>	Margot Patterson	2008 Liturgical Press	891 as of Sept. 2014	Islam 101	Understand Middle East, news, why Muslims; Readers appreciate, identify similarities; Spurs further study of Islam
<i>Islam: What Catholics Need to Know</i>	Rev. Elias D. Mallon, PhD	2006 National Catholic Education Association	1,521 as of Aug. 2016	Islam 101	Motivation for dialogue/encounters/reconciliation/peace/mutual understanding
<i>A Christian View of Islam: Essays on Dialogue</i>	Thomas Michel and Irfan Omar	2010 Orbis	1,192 copies sold as of July 2016	Comparative	Adding to Catholic-Muslim studies literature
<i>The Mission and Death of Jesus in Islam and Christianity</i>	A.H. Mathias Zahniser	2009 Orbis	954 copies, as of July 2016	Comparative	No explicit statement of goals
<i>Meeting Islam: A Guide for Catholics</i>	George Dardess	2005 Paraclete Press	3,500 as of Oct. 2014	Islam 101	Motivation for dialogue/encounters/reconciliation/peace/mutual understanding; Fill a need for guidance on Islam
<i>101 Questions & Answers on Islam</i>	John Renard	1998, Second Edition 2004 Paulist Press	2,332 as of Oct. 2014	Islam 101	No explicit statement of goals

Title	Author	Year Original publisher	Copies sold	Category	Stated goals, intended impact on readers
<i>Critical Questions Between Islam and Christianity</i>	Jesse Romero, Terry Barber, Robert Spencer	? St. Joseph Communi- cations	Refused	Comparative	No explicit statement of goals
<i>Islam and Christianity</i>	Marcus Barber	? St. Joseph Communi-	Refused	Comparative	No explicit statement of goals
<i>Islam Exposed: The Crescent in Light of the Cross</i>	Tim Staples	? St. Joseph Communi- cations	Refused	Islam 101	Motivation for dialogue/encounters/ reconciliation/peace/ mutual understanding; Defend the faith, “face Islam”
<i>Catholics and Muslims: Friends or Adversaries?</i>	Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs	2007 USCCB Publishing	No response	Islam 101	No explicit statement of goals
<i>Understanding Islam: A Guide for Christian Educators</i>	Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs	2013 USCCB Publishing	No response	Islam 101	Motivation for dialogue/encounters/ reconciliation/peace/ mutual understanding; That readers present Islam more accurately to others/students; Live out Church teaching

APPENDIX E:

Top Words Used in the Titles of All Catholic Books on Islam

1. World: 9 times
2. Dialogue: 8
3. Faith: 6
4. Guide: 6
5. Crusades: 5
6. Francis: 5
7. Interreligious: 5
8. Peace: 5
9. Religions: 5
10. Answer: 5

Top Ten Words Used in the Titles of Introductory and Comparative Materials on Islam

1. Guide: 4 times
2. Know: 4
3. Bible: 3
4. Jesus: 3
5. Questions: 3
6. Qur'an: 3
7. Allah: 2
8. Differences: 2
9. Perspective: 2
10. View: 2

Top Ten Words Used In Descriptions of Introductory and Comparative Materials (Including words tied for tenth)

1. Differences: 17 times
2. Questions: 13
3. Practices: 13
4. Religion: 12
5. Faith: 10
6. History: 10
7. Answer: 10
8. Information: 10
9. Way: 10
10. Reader: 9
11. Teaching: 9

ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER 1

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