

Are *you* a **CATHOLIC?**



You may *also* be a
HUMANIST!

HUMANISTS
believe in **GOOD.**

THE AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

provides a humanist perspective in strong support of separation of religion from government, preservation and restoration of the environment, protection of civil rights and liberties, and promotion of personal choice regarding introduction of new life, family structure, and death with dignity. Though humanists are not monolithic on every issue—this is a community that encourages tolerance and nurtures diversity—we directly challenge human rights violations and discrimination.



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JESUS was born to a Greco-Roman world where classical humanism of the Greek philosophers no longer held sway on affairs of state. In fact, imperial greed, corruption, and authoritarianism had reduced the human condition of the populace with constant wars, terror, persecutions, poverty, desperation, rage and revolts. Facing such an environment, Jesus sought to comfort people with messages of God's love, compassion and personal concern in his Sermon on the Mount. According to the noncanonical Gospel of Thomas, Jesus was probably a rebel leader: *Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the world. They do not know that I have come to cast strife upon the earth; fire, sword, and war.* The Romans crucified him in year 33.

Some of the many churches that organized around his memory were more humanistic than others. By year 325, a unified Catholic church represented the official religion of the Roman Empire. Its founding legacy combined some humanistic aspects of Jewish, Greek, and Roman cultures along with authoritarian and spiritual elements. The church evolved from a proliferation of marginal sects into a powerful partner in a new church-state governing body destined to dominate Europe. Given these beginnings, Catholicism's humanistic heritage was suppressed from playing a key role in governance for many centuries, until the cultural conditions and reforms of the Renaissance and Enlightenment eras reduced clergy political power and enabled the education of the laity.



HUMANISM is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.

“Blessed are they that mourn, blessed are the meek, blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the peacemakers, blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.”

—Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount

“We are committed to treating each person as having inherent worth and dignity, and to making informed choices in a context of freedom consonant with responsibility.”

—Humanism and Its Aspirations,
Humanist Manifesto III, 2003

“I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute—where no Catholic prelate would tell the President (should he be Catholic) how to act, and no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote—where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference—and where no man is denied public office merely because his religion differs from the President who might appoint him or the people who might elect him.”

—President John F. Kennedy, 1960

“Thanks to the separation of church and state, you are in complete control of the religious upbringing of your children. Government institutions, including the public school system, are not permitted to coerce your children to adopt new and different religions.”

—Rev. Barry W. Lynn,
AHA Humanist Religious Liberty Awardee

But *how* can I be a **CATHOLIC** and a **HUMANIST**?

You can strengthen the humanist side of your Catholic commitment by learning about the many heroes, beginning with Jesus, whose lives and work continue to exemplify and inspire the best in human and social character. You can also follow the example of the many Catholics who criticize abuses within the church in order to promote the tradition’s stated ethical ideals. And finally you can seek dialogue with humanists in your community on core issues shared between humanist and Catholics, such as those cited here.

HUMANISTS | CATHOLICS Strive to end the major causes of human suffering as urged by Pope John Paul II and by Pope Paul IV.

HUMANISTS | CATHOLICS Strive to reduce environmental harm that threatens the Earth’s living systems.

HUMANISTS | CATHOLICS Respect and support the freedom to maintain spiritual and philosophical traditions in our pluralistic society.

“To wage war on misery and to struggle against injustice is to promote, along with improved conditions, the human and spiritual progress of all men, and therefore the common good of humanity. Peace cannot be limited to a mere absence of war, the result of an ever-precarious balance of forces. No, peace is something that is built up day after day, in the pursuit of an order intended by God, which implies a more perfect form of justice among men.”

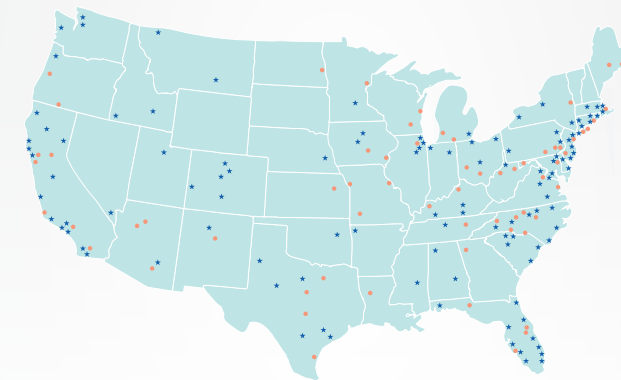
—Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progresio*
(On the Development of Peoples) 1967

Be a part of the *growing*
HUMANIST
MOVEMENT!

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

Membership: New members receive a free book about humanism. All members receive voting privileges, the *Humanist* magazine, and discounts on AHA conferences, seminars, books, literature, and more!

Local Communities: Start or join a local AHA Chapter or Affiliate to connect with humanists in your area and build the humanist community.



Local AHA communities: ★ Chapter ● Affiliate

Education: Enjoy our Center for Education’s innovative online and in-person resources designed for individuals, professionals, and groups across the humanist spectrum.

Advocacy: Help us protect the separation of church and state and advocate for social justice and universal human rights.

Visit us at AMERICANHUMANIST.ORG for details.

See more at www.americanhumanist.org/paths