

# An open and honest conversation about religion



“These are the kinds of conversations we can’t have out there anymore!”

My unexpected lunch companion burst this out with some relief and surprise and joy. I was at a beautiful, casual brunch of less than a dozen women, all friends of the lovely host. Going in, I only knew a few of the women.

And I really didn’t think we’d wind up talking about politics and religion – those things that you’re warned never to talk about in mixed company. But I should have known, because I am a magnet for these conversations. Especially after the introduction is made – which basically labels me conservative from the outside, if the listener knows National Review is conservative (and this was largely the age-set who would recognize our founder William F. Buckley Jr.’s name as one). And, I was also asked to give the opening prayer, designated as “most qualified.” (She who prays the most just happens to be one who knows what a pathetic sinner she is without God.) So, we were off to the races in the conversation from the get-go.

And, to increase the potential intensity of conversation, somehow, with me, it never takes too long to get to abortion. And thanks be to God for that, because we wound up having the most wonderful conversation about [common ground](#) and informed consent.

Minds weren’t changed, but I can say with some certainty that

everyone was encouraged, most especially that these kinds of conversations are still possible in the world and they are important to have. We bemoaned how polarized everything is, how there are no incentives in politics for nuance or real virtuous and [courageous leadership](#). But, of course, that's why it's courageous to be different.

We talked, too, about religion, and how hard it is in the world today. One of the women was a secular Muslim, married to a Brit in the Church of England. She wants her children to know about God, know there is someone to whom they should be grateful. That Christmas is about more than a tree, and Easter is not about the [Easter Bunny](#). "I suppose that is a very 21st-century approach to religion," she observed.

She shared that when she has raised her children, she would like to make a journey somewhere to explore faith. "Maybe go to [Mecca](#)." I didn't point out that she's already on that journey. In asking the questions, she also asked about how I came to faith and why it's important.

There's nothing more important, of course, and yet it is a gift. I pray that it is sooner than she realizes that she can say "yes" to a deeper faith and trust in God. From what she shared, I think she is living faith more than she realizes, just in a spiritual way and not a religious one. Dear readers, would you ask the Blessed Mother to make her presence felt in this woman's life? (God knows who she is.) And in the lives of all mothers in similar positions – wanting God but not having a community to support her in it, and so not knowing how to go about it.

We see here why our secular culture is so cruel. It would take a little bit of a miracle for this woman to know how to go about giving her children a formal religious education.

The woman who was on my (physical) right is a Christian married to a Jew. She shared how people quite casually react

with anti-Semitism when they know that. There's something sinister about anti-Semitism and all racism. The remedy is actually knowing one another and loving one another.

Before we parted, I told one of my new friends I'd be praying for her. She thanked me, saying she was hoping I would.

Someone recently described one of the attractive things about joining the Catholic Church is that it means entrance into a global family – one that is eternal, too. I don't see that happening unless some miracle of God intervenes in this particular case, but she knows she has the desire for God. And my Catholic family is praying now thanks to a holiday lunch. Thank you.

*Kathryn Jean Lopez is a senior fellow at the National Review Institute and editor-at-large of National Review.*