In a world where interreligious dialogue is increasingly promoted, Catholics find themselves at a crossroads: how should we respond to religious festivals and practices that do not belong to our faith without compromising the truth of the Gospel? One particular case is Ramadan, the sacred month of Islam, during which millions of Muslims around the world fast, pray, and engage in charitable acts with special intensity.

As Catholics, we are called to charity and respect for those who do not share our faith. However, this does not mean falling into relativism or diluting the truth of Christ in a false religious brotherhood. The key is to understand our faith, affirm the supremacy of Christian revelation, and at the same time, exercise the virtue of charity in truth.

What Is Ramadan and What Does It Represent for Muslims?

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is considered by Muslims to be the period when Muhammad received the first revelation of the Quran. During this month, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, abstain from certain actions, and engage in special prayers. Charity and efforts to become better individuals are also encouraged.

While some elements may superficially resemble Christian practices, such as fasting or charity, the theology behind Ramadan is radically different from the Christian understanding of salvation and the relationship with God.

Should a Catholic Participate in Ramadan?

In some modern ecclesiastical circles, the idea has been promoted that Catholics can join in the practice of Ramadan as a gesture of solidarity or respect. However, this stance is problematic for several reasons:

1. **Christian Fasting Is Not Islamic Fasting**
   In the Christian tradition, fasting is an act of penance, purification, and union with Christ's sacrifice. Jesus Himself taught that fasting should be discreet and without ostentation (Mt 6:16-18). In contrast, Islamic fasting is a mandatory practice aimed at earning merit before Allah, within a legalistic framework of religion.
2. **Fundamental Difference in the Image of God**
   While the Christian God is a loving Father who revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, Islam presents a vision of God that is distant, impersonal, and absolutely transcendent, with no possibility of incarnation or filial relationship with humanity. Participating in

Ramadan without this awareness can lead to confusion about the true nature of God.

3. **The Danger of Religious Syncretism**
   St. Paul exhorts us: *"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers"* (2 Cor 6:14). The modern tendency to equate all religions as if they were equivalent paths to God is a grave error. Christ is *"the way, the truth, and the life"* (Jn 14:6), and there is no salvation outside of Him.
4. **Fasting During Ramadan to Evangelize?**
   Some argue that joining Ramadan can be a way to approach and evangelize Muslims. However, this only reinforces the idea that all religions are similar. True evangelization does not come from mimicking other religions but from boldly showing the fullness of the Catholic faith.

How Should a Catholic Approach Ramadan and Muslims?

The Church calls us to be witnesses of the Gospel in all circumstances. Our relationship with Muslims should be marked by respect but also by doctrinal clarity. Here are some practical guidelines:

1. Do Not Give In to Political Correctness

Respect does not mean remaining silent about the truth. If asked about Ramadan, we should explain why our faith is different and why salvation is found only in Christ. Let us remember the words of St. Peter: *"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have"* (1 Pet 3:15).

2. Witness Through Our Own Penitential Practices

Catholics have our own disciplines of fasting and penance, especially during Lent. Instead of participating in Ramadan, we can deepen our own practices and testify to the richness of our faith.

3. Pray for the Conversion of Muslims

Christ died for all, and as Catholics, our mission is to bring the Gospel to all nations. We can use the time of Ramadan as an opportunity to pray especially for the conversion of Muslims to the true faith in Jesus Christ.

4. Avoid Religious Indifferentism

Today, many Christians believe that all religions lead to God. This is a grave deviation from the faith. As St. Pius X said: *"The Catholic religion is the only true religion."* We cannot betray Christ by embracing foreign practices as if they were equivalent to the Christian faith.

Conclusion: Firm in Faith, Charitable in Truth

As Catholics, we must love and respect all people, including Muslims, but without yielding in the truth. Interreligious dialogue should not lead us to confusion or the loss of our identity. Our mission is to proclaim clearly that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of the world and that there is no salvation outside of Him.

In a time when relativism threatens to blur the faith, let us remember the words of Our Lord: *"If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory"* (Mk 8:38).

May our response to Ramadan not be the lukewarmness of the modern world but the firmness of Christian witness—charitable, respectful, but unwavering.