

ADDRESS

"ANTISEMITISM: THE HISTORICAL LEGACY AND  
THE CONTINUING CHALLENGE FOR CHRISTIANS"

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Ladies and gentlemen, I am greatly honored by your conferral upon me of the Honorary Fellowship of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. It is a humbling experience, indeed, to receive such an honor from this distinguished scholarly community. I am also very grateful for this opportunity to address you on the subject of antisemitism from a Catholic point of view.

In recent years the Catholic Church has undertaken important efforts to acknowledge guilt for the legacy of antisemitism and to repudiate as sinful any remaining vestiges of that legacy in its contemporary teaching and practice. In 1989, the Pontifical Commission for Peace and Justice issued a strong declaration on racism, which had an international impact. The document, entitled The Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society, insisted that "Harboring racist thoughts and entertaining racist attitudes is a sin." (#24)<sup>1</sup> And it clearly included antisemitism on its list of continuing manifestations of racist ideologies that are to be regarded as sinful. In point of fact, The Church and Racism calls antisemitism "the most tragic form that racist ideology has assumed in our century" and warns that certain forms of anti-Zionism, while not of the

same order, often serve as a screen for antisemitism, feeding on it and leading to it. (#15)

Pope John Paul II has taken up the challenge to antisemitism put forth by the Pontifical Commission on several occasions in recent years. During a visit to Hungary in 1991, conscious of the post-Communist era resurgence of antisemitism in certain parts of Central and Eastern Europe, the Pope spoke of the urgent task of repentance and reconciliation: In face of a risk of a resurgence and spread of antisemitic feelings, attitudes, and initiatives, of which certain disquieting signs are to be seen today and of which we have experienced the most frightful results in the past, we must teach consciences to consider antisemitism, and all forms of racism, as sins against God and humanity."<sup>3</sup> And in his current book, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, the Holy Father repeats this theme as he calls antisemitism "a great sin against humanity."<sup>4</sup>

In my address this afternoon I will reflect on how we can work to eradicate the evil of antisemitism from our midst. This is not an easy task; it is one to which I have been dedicated for many years. My reflections will have four parts: (1) the roots of antisemitism in Christian history, (2) contemporary developments in Catholic theology, (3) thoughts on the relationship between antisemitism and Nazism, and (4) actions that can be taken to ensure that antisemitism is not part of the future.

Origins of Antisemitism

Allow me to explore briefly some of the reasons why antisemitism has been part of Christian life. It is important that we do this because antisemitism has deep roots in Christian history, which go back to the earliest days of the Church. In fact, as Father Edward Flannery has shown in his classic work on antisemitism, The Anguish of the Jews,<sup>5</sup> the early Christian community inherited a cultural tradition from the Greco-Roman civilization that included a prejudicial outlook towards Jews. Jews were disliked in pre-Christian Greece and Rome for their general unwillingness to conform to prevailing social mores. It is regrettable that this long history of antisemitism in a Christian context has been virtually eliminated from our history texts and other educational materials. Inclusion of this history, as painful as it is for us to hear today, is a necessary requirement for authentic reconciliation between Christians and Jews in our time.

In addition, there were many other factors that likely contributed to the growth of anti-Jewish feelings among Christians in the first centuries of the Church's existence. For one, the overwhelming number of early Christians came from Greco-Roman communities with little personal acquaintance with Jews and Judaism. We now know from scholars dealing with early Christianity, such as Robert Wilken<sup>6</sup> and Anthony Saldarini,<sup>7</sup> that the final break between Judaism and Christianity was a far more gradual process than we once imagined, extending into the third and fourth centuries in some areas of the East. Nevertheless, the formative influence of Jewish Christianity upon the Church as a whole declined rapidly after the pivotal decision reached by Paul and the representatives

of the Jerusalem Church at what is often called the Council of Jerusalem. This resulted in the loss of any countervailing positive identification with Jews and their religious heritage that could overcome the new converts' inbred cultural prejudices. This tendency towards separation from anything Jewish was further enhanced by the desire to avoid any linkage between the Church and the Jewish community after the disastrous Jewish revolt against the Roman imperial authorities (66-70 C.E.) which, besides the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, generated continued post-war pressure and retribution by Rome against the Jewish community.

Another factor contributing to the emergence of antisemitism in early Christianity may be the image of Jews that emerges from the New Testament itself. There are texts that remain open to anti-Judaic interpretation, and there is ample evidence that such interpretations emerged in the first centuries of Christian history.

Negative attitudes towards Jews in the New Testament were only the beginning of difficulties for the Jewish community. Unfortunately, there soon developed within the teachings of the early Fathers of the Church a strong tendency to regard Jews as entirely displaced from the covenantal relationship because of their unwillingness to accept Jesus as the Messiah, despite the clear teaching to the contrary on the part of St. Paul in Romans 9-11, which served as a basis for the Second Vatican Council's renewed constructive theology of the Christian-Jewish relationship.

This belief, that the Jews had been totally rejected by God and replaced in the covenantal relationship by the "New Israel," led to the

emergence of another widespread doctrine in patristic writings. I have in mind the so-called "perpetual wandering" theology which consigned Jews to a condition of permanent statelessness as a consequence of their displacement from the covenant as a punishment for murdering the Messiah. This condition of being permanently displaced persons was meant as an enduring sign of Jewish sinfulness and as a warning to others of what they could expect if they too failed to accept Christ. This theology became so deep-seated in popular culture that even a familiar houseplant -- the "wandering Jew" -- took on its name.

We can illustrate this theology of "perpetual wandering" with references from certain central figures in the patristic era. Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 265-339 C.E.), for example, speaks of how the royal metropolis of the Jews would be destroyed by fire and the city would become inhabited no longer by Jews, "but by races of other stock, while they (i.e., the Jews) would be dispersed among the Gentiles throughout the whole world with never a hope of any cessation of evil or breathing space from troubles."<sup>8</sup> St. Cyprian of Carthage (c. 210-258 C.E.), relying on various prophetic texts, which suggest desolation and exile as a consequence of sin, envisioned Israel as having entered its final state of desolation and exile. Following in the same vein, St. Hippolytus of Rome, who was born around 170 C.E., insisted that, unlike the exilic experiences suffered by the Jews at the hands of the Egyptians and the Babylonians in earlier times, the postbiblical exile would continue throughout the course of human history. In the East, St. John Chrysostom (344-407 C.E.) clearly linked the now permanent exilic condition of the Jews with the "killing of

Christ." And St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 C.E.) in his classic work, City of God, speaks several times of the Jews as having "their back bend down always."

While the patristic writings were far more than an extended anti-Jewish treatise, Christians cannot ignore this "shadow side" of patristic theology, which in other aspects remains a continuing source of profound spiritual enrichment. Jews are very well aware of the "shadow side" of this theology; unfortunately, Christians generally are not. It has been omitted from basic Christian texts far too often. Yet, we cannot understand the treatment of Jews in subsequent centuries without some grasp of this theology. The history to which it gave rise is replete with persistent forms of social and religious discrimination and persecution, which brought upon the Jewish community continual humiliation as well as political and civil inequality. on occasion, this further degenerated into outright physical suffering and even death, especially in such periods as that of the Crusades.

This legacy of antisemitism, with its profoundly negative social consequences for Jews as individuals and for the Jewish community as a whole, remained the dominant social pattern in western Christian lands until the twentieth century. While we can point to some notable breaks in this pattern in such countries as Spain and Poland, as well as for individual Jews in the liberal democracies created in parts of Europe and North America, the respite was sometimes short-lived and, as in the case of Spain, followed by even more flagrant forms of attack on the Jewish community.

At the dawn of the twentieth century the theology of perpetual divine judgment upon Jewish people did not vanish overnight. Rather, it continued to exercise a decisive role in shaping Catholicism's initial reactions, for example, to the proposal for restoring a Jewish national homeland in Palestine. It also was of central importance in shaping popular Christian attitudes towards the Nazis and their stated goal of eliminating all Jews from Europe and beyond through deliberate extermination. While I will return to this question of classical antisemitism and its role during that period, there is little doubt that this persistent tradition provided an indispensable seedbed for the Nazis' ability to succeed as far as they did in their master plan. They would not have secured the popular support they enjoyed were it not for the continuing influence of traditional Christian antisemitism on the masses of baptized believers in Europe.

Both Father Edward Flannery and the late Professor Uriel Tal have emphasized the significant impact of classical Christian antisemitism upon the development of Nazism, despite their shared conviction that the philosophy of the Third Reich resulted primarily from distinctly modern forces. Flannery argues that the architects of the Shoah found their Jewish targets well-primed for the formulation of their racist theories: The degraded state of the Jews, brought about by centuries of opprobrium and oppression, gave support to the invidious comparisons with which the racists built their theories. And in their evil design, they were able to draw moral support from traditional views of Jews and Judaism.<sup>9</sup>

Professor Tal offered an analysis very similar to that of Father Flannery's in this regard. He insisted that Nazi racial antisemitism was not totally original when subjected to careful scrutiny. Rather, traditional Christian stereotypes of Jews and Judaism were clothed in new pseudoscientific jargon and applied to specific historical realities of the period. Tal insisted that racial anti-Semitism and the subsequent Nazi movement were not the result of mass hysteria or the work of single propagandists. The racial antisemites, despite their antagonism toward traditional Christianity, learned much from it, and succeeded in producing a well-prepared, systematic ideology with a logic of its own that reached its culmination in the Third Reich.<sup>10</sup>

#### Contemporary Developments

Having traced the development of antisemitism within Christianity, we can turn to contemporary developments. In the three decades or so since the beginning of the Second Vatican Council, the negative theology of the Jewish people has lost its theological foundations. In chapter four of Nostra Aetate, the Council clearly asserted that there never existed a valid basis either for the charge of collective guilt against the Jewish community for supposedly "murdering the Messiah" or for the consequent theology of permanent Jewish suffering and displacement. With its positive affirmation of continued covenantal inclusion on the part of the Jewish People after the coming of Christ Jesus, following St. Paul in Romans 9-11, the Council permanently removed all basis for the long-held

"perpetual wandering" theology and the social deprivation and suffering that flowed from it.

The Second Vatican Council's removal of the classical "displacement / perpetual wandering" theology from contemporary Catholic catechesis has been enhanced in subsequent documents from the Holy See and Pope John Paul II. The Holy See's 1985 Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church, issued to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Nostra Aetate, make two very important constructive affirmations, especially when these are set over against the history of Catholicism's traditional approach to the question of Jewish existence. Both occur in paragraph #25 where the Notes maintain that "the history of Israel did not end in 70 A.D. (i.e., with the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by the Romans) ....It continued, especially in a numerous Diaspora which allowed Israel to carry to the whole world a witness ...while preserving the memory of the land of their forefathers at the heart of their hope" and, subsequently, that "the permanence of Israel (while so many ancient peoples have disappeared without a trace) is a historic fact and a sign to be interpreted within God's design." Both these statements clearly repudiate a "displacement" theology.

Pope John Paul II, who has contributed significantly to the development of the Church's new theological outlook on Jews and Judaism,<sup>11</sup> wrote the following in his 1984 statement Redemptionis anno: For the Jewish people who live in the State of Israel and who preserve in that land such precious testimonies of their history and their faith, we must

ask for the desired security and due tranquility that is the prerogative of every nation and condition of life and of progress of every society.<sup>12</sup>

This statement clearly exhibits on the part of the Holy Father a sense of the deep intertwining of faith and continued attachment to the land on the part of the Jewish People, a sense that further draws out the profound implications of the renewed theology of the Christian-Jewish relationship put forth by the Second Vatican Council.

Two recent documents of the Holy See further seal the coffin of the biblically unfounded "displacement" theology. The first is the text of the new Catechism of the Catholic Church, which reaffirms the two major points on which the Council built its new theological approach to the Jewish People. In paragraph #597 the Catechism rejects any idea that all Jews then or now can be charged with the responsibility for Jesus' death. It reminds Christians that their sins were largely the reason why Jesus died on the cross. And paragraph #849 speaks of the distinctiveness of Jewish faith as an authentic response to God's original revelation and underlines the permanence of the divine promise made to the people Israel.<sup>13</sup>

The second document is the Holy See-Israeli Accords. While this is fundamentally a political document that develops a framework for dealing with concrete issues, it has an underlying theological significance as well. Mindful of the longstanding theological approach to Jewish political sovereignty on the part of the Catholic tradition, the Preamble to the Accords has set this essentially political document within the overall context of the process of Catholic-Jewish reconciliation underway

in the Church since the Second Vatican Council: ....aware of the unique nature of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people, and the historic process of reconciliation and growth in mutual understanding and friendship between Catholics and Jews .... So reads the opening part of the Accords. It is also well to note that article #2 of the Accords contains a very strong and unequivocal condemnation by the Holy See of "hatred, persecution, and all manifestations of antisemitism directed against the Jewish people and individual Jews..." I welcome this forthright statement as well as the accompanying pledge by the Holy See and the State of Israel to cooperate in every possible way in combatting all forms of antisemitism and all kinds of racism and of religious intolerance, and in promoting mutual understanding among nations, tolerance among communities, and respect for human life and dignity. (#1) This statement makes concrete the renewed theological vision of the Christian-Jewish relationship developed at the Second Vatican Council. It also solidifies the notion that forms of racism, including antisemitism, are fundamentally sinful as the 1989 Holy See document and the papal statements I cited earlier make clear.

The Holy See's action in formally recognizing Israel through the Accords represents a final seal on the process begun at the Second Vatican Council to rid Catholicism of all vestiges of "displacement theology" and the implied notion of perpetual Jewish homelessness. The Accords represent the Catholic Church's full and final acknowledgment of Jews as a people, not merely as individuals. I recognize that for the vast majority of Jews, Israel signifies their ultimate tie to Jewish peoplehood, their

central point of self-identity. And, as the Holy See's 1974 Guidelines on Catholic-Jewish relations pointed out, authentic dialogue requires that all partners come to understand and respect one another as they define themselves. As Arthur Hertzberg has shown very well in his classic work, The French Enlightenment and the Jews,<sup>14</sup> even democratic societies that were prepared to grant Jews a measure of personal freedom and political rights were unable to accept the idea of Jewish peoplehood.

Until now I have been speaking of developments that have already occurred. As we all know, much more needs to be done. In particular, there is need for continued scholarship and theological reflection, especially with regard to what many consider to be problematic New Testament texts. While it is not certain that any of these texts themselves can be legitimately termed "antisemitic," or even "anti-Judaic," scholars differ significantly on this point and will likely do so for the foreseeable future. I am aware that some scholars doing important research on this topic, including people here in Jerusalem such as Malcolm Lowe, believe the problem is essentially one of mistranslation. Others interpret it primarily as an internal Jewish polemic, which was not an uncommon phenomenon in the period, as we know from certain Jewish documents, the Talmud included.<sup>15</sup> Retranslation (where scholarly consensus can be achieved) and reinterpretation certainly are to be included among the goals we pursue in the effort at eradicating antisemitism. But at this point, the requisite scholarly consensus on the especially problematic passages appears a long way off.

In the interim, as we await a scholarly resolution of the question of antisemitism in the New Testament, I would strongly urge that the Church adopt a pastoral approach. Father Raymond Brown, a renowned Catholic scholar on the Gospel of John, has suggested the basis of such a pastoral approach, at least with respect to the Fourth Gospel, which is generally considered among the most problematic of all New Testament books in its outlook towards Jews and Judaism. In commenting on John's use of the term, "the Jews," Brown expresses his conviction that, by deliberately using this generic term (where other gospel writers refer to the Jewish authorities or the various Second Temple Jewish parties), John meant to extend to the synagogue of his own day blame that an earlier tradition had attributed to the Jewish authorities. Although John was not the first to engage in such extension, he is the most insistent New Testament author in this regard. Brown attributes this process in John to the persecution that Christians were experiencing during that time at the hands of the synagogue authorities. Jews who professed Jesus to be the Messiah had been officially expelled from Judaism, thus making them vulnerable to Roman investigation and punishment. Jews were tolerated by Rome, but who were these Christians whom the Jews disclaimed?

Father Brown maintains that this teaching of John about the Jews, which resulted from the historical conflict between Church and synagogue in the latter part of the first century C.E., can no longer be taught as authentic doctrine or used as catechesis by contemporary Christianity. This is the key pastoral point. Christians today must come to see that such teachings, while an acknowledged part of their biblical heritage, can

no longer be regarded as definitive teaching in light of our improved understanding of developments in the relationship between early Christianity and the Jewish community of the time. As Brown says in his book, The Community of the Beloved Disciple, "It would be incredible for a twentieth-century Christian to share or justify the Johannine contention that 'the Jews' are the children of the Devil, an affirmation which is placed on the lips of Jesus (John 8:44)."16

Negative passages such as these must be re-evaluated in light of the Second Vatican Council's strong affirmation in its Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (Nostra Aetate) that Jews remain a covenanted people, revered by God. The teaching of recent Popes has also emphasized this. Pope John Paul II, in particular, has often highlighted the intimate bond that exists between Jews and Christians who are united in one ongoing covenant.

### Nazism and Antisemitism

I would now like to return to the issue of Nazism and antisemitism, which continues to elicit considerable discussion today. I know it remains an important area of concern for this university, especially the Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism directed by Professor Yehuda Bauer. I am likewise aware of the many outstanding contributions made to our understanding of the Shoah by other members of your faculty, including Professors Israel Gutman and Emil Fackenheim. During the past several decades, scholars throughout the world have advanced various perspectives on the relationship between the rise of

Nazism and classical Christian hatred of the Jews. Some draw virtually a straight line from classical Christian thought regarding the Jewish People to the emergence of the Shoah. They point, for example, to Hitler's often-quoted remark to Church leaders, who came to see him to protest his treatment of Jews, that he was merely putting into practice what the Christian churches had preached for nearly two thousand years. These perspectives also highlight the close similarity between much of Nazi anti-Jewish legislation and laws against Jews in earlier Christian-dominated societies.

As I have already pointed out, relying on the research of Father Flannery and the late Professor Tal, there is little doubt that classical Christian presentations of Jews and Judaism were a central factor in generating popular support for the Nazi endeavor, along with economic greed, religious and political nationalism, and ordinary human fear. For many baptized Christians, traditional Christian beliefs about Jews and Judaism constituted the primary motivation for their support, active or tacit, of the Nazi movement. Some even went so far as to define the Nazi struggle against the Jews in explicitly religious and theological terms. In the Church today, we must not minimize the extent of Christian collaboration with Hitler and his associates. It remains a profound moral challenge that we must continue to confront for our own integrity as a religious community.

Nevertheless, in the final analysis, I must side with the perspective of those scholars such as Yosef Yerushalmi who have insisted that "the Holocaust was the work of a thoroughly modern, neopagan state," not merely

a "transformed" medieval antisemitism rooted in Christian teachings.<sup>17</sup> The Shoah cannot be seen as simply the final and most gruesome chapter in the long history of Christian antisemitism. Rather, it was a plan for the mass destruction of human lives, supposedly undertaken in the name of "healing" humanity, as the psychologist Robert J. Lifton has put it, rooted in modern theories of inherent biological and racial inferiority, coupled with the escalation of bureaucratic and technological capacities. At its depths, it was profoundly as anti-Christian as it was anti-Jewish, evidenced by the fact that at least one of its theoreticians attempted to rewrite the New Testament totally based on Nazi concepts. It coalesced several important modern strains of thought into its master plan for human extermination.

To bring this plan to realization required, as the Nazis envisioned it, the elimination of the "dregs" of society. These they defined as first and foremost the Jewish people, but the category also was extended to embrace the disabled, Gypsies, the Polish leadership, homosexuals, and certain other designated groups. Proper distinctions need to be maintained between the wholesale attack on the Jewish people, for whom there was absolutely no escape from Nazi fury, and the others subjected to systematic Nazi attack. But there is also a linkage with the victimization of these other groups whose suffering and death were integral, not peripheral, to the overall Nazi plan. This is what makes the Holocaust sui generis, even though the fate of its primary victims, the Jews, had important ties to classical Christian teachings.

## Future Possibilities

Let us turn now from the horrors of the past to the possibilities of the future. Confronting the legacy of antisemitism will not prove easy, but confront it we must. Allow me to discuss several ways in which this can be done.

1. The history of antisemitism and of anti-Judaic theology must be restored to our Catholic teaching materials. Innocence or ignorance is not a pathway to authentic virtue in this regard; courageous honesty is. In our religious education programs we should be prepared to tell the full story of the Church's treatment of Jews over the centuries, ending with a rejection of the shadow side of that history and theology at the Second Vatican Council. We can and should highlight moments of relative tranquility and constructive interaction when they occurred in such countries as Poland, Spain, and the United States, but these stories should never obscure the more pronounced history of hostility and subjection.

2. We also need an integral understanding of the Holocaust. In developing such an understanding, we have a responsibility to speak against unwarranted and generalized accusations directed at the Church and Church leaders. We need to re-emphasize the protest statements and oppositional actions of Christian leaders and grassroots groups and individuals. The Fulda Declaration of the German Catholic Bishops, the Barmen Declaration of the Confessing Church (Lutheran) in Germany, the encyclical letter Mit Brennender Sorge issued in German by Pope Pius XI, the efforts of Archbishops Angelo Roncalli and Angelo Rotta, the Zegota

movement in Poland, the many Catholic women religious whose communities hid Jews, the men and women of Le Chambon in France, Jan Karski of the Polish government- in-exile, the Austrian peasant Franz Jagerstatter - I could go on. To be sure, there were not enough. But these Christians preserved a measure of moral integrity in the Church during these years of Nazi darkness.

Nevertheless, the witness of these courageous Christian leaders, groups, and individuals should never be used to argue against the need for a full scrutiny of Church activities by reputable scholars. We must be prepared to deal honestly and candidly with the genuine failures of some in the Christian churches during that critical period. To that end, I would repeat what I first said in my keynote address to those attending the meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee held in Baltimore in May, 1992. The Catholic Church must be prepared to submit its World War II record to a thorough scrutiny by respected scholars. The detailed investigation of diocesan records from the Nazi era undertaken that same year in Lyons, France, with the support of the Cardinal Archbishop is a fine example of what I have in mind.

Such efforts should avoid broad generalizations, but instead focus in depth on specific geographic regions, as do, for example, the recent work on Poland by Dr. Ronald Modras (18) here at this University and the symposium papers collected by Professors Otto Dov Kulka and Paul Mendes-Flohr in the volume Judaism and Christianity Under the Impact of National Socialism. (19)

3. Education about the Holocaust should become a prominent feature in Catholic education at every level. To assist in realizing this goal, Seton Hill College near Pittsburgh has established a program explicitly designed for Catholic teachers that works closely with both Yad VaShem and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. And in Chicago, I have instructed the archdiocesan school system to comply with the state mandate on Holocaust education even though it does not technically apply to our institutions.

4. But we must go beyond merely teaching the failures of the past, as crucial as that task remains. Nostra Aetate and subsequent documents from the Holy See, as well as Pope John Paul II, have not merely removed the classical prejudices against Jews and Judaism from Catholic teaching. They have laid out the basis for a positive theology of reconciliation and bonding. This, too, must become part of our current effort in education.

In fact, several studies on Catholic religion materials undertaken by Sister Rose Thering at St. Louis University,<sup>20</sup> Dr. Eugene J. Fisher at New York University,<sup>21</sup> and most recently, Dr. Philip Cunningham at Boston College,<sup>22</sup> have shown a steady development in the presentation of the Christian-Jewish relationship, from one marked by classical stereotypes to one focused on the bonding of Christians and Jews within the one covenanted family. Not all problems have been resolved, but the progress has been remarkable. In this connection, I wish to add that it is my hope that, at the same time as we seek to develop a positive Christian understanding, Jewish educators will also be able to rethink the Jewish community's understanding of its relationship with the Church.

5. Liturgy and preaching are additional areas that require continued attention by the Church. In 1988, the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy released a set of guidelines for the presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic preaching. (23) They offer directions for implementing the vision of Nostra Aetate and subsequent documents of the Holy See in the Church's ministry of the Word during the various liturgical seasons. Especially highlighted are the seasons of Lent/Holy Week and Easter, whose texts can serve to reinforce classical Christian stereotypes of Jews and Judaism if not interpreted carefully. The great challenge of these liturgical seasons is that they become times of reconciliation between Jews and Christians rather than conflict and division, as they were in past centuries. Christians need to recognize their profound bonds with the Jewish people during these central periods of the liturgical year in accord with the vision expressed by the Second Vatican Council and Pope John Paul II.

6. But education and preaching will not prove completely effective unless we also have women and men of vision and reconciliation who embody the new spirit of Jewish-Christian bonding. I especially honor all those Christians in this land who have embodied Nostra Aetate in their lives and work for many years. In a particular way, I would like to congratulate Father Marcel Dubois of the Dominican community on this his seventy-fifth birthday. Through his many years of service as a member of the faculty here at Hebrew University, and through his painstaking efforts as a consultant to the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the

Jews, he has helped to shape the face of contemporary Catholic-Jewish relations.

7. Above all, in light of the history of antisemitism and the Holocaust, the Church needs to engage in public repentance. As I remembered the six million Jewish victims of the Shoah this morning at Yad VaShem, I was reminded of the Holy Father's call upon the Christian community, in preparation for the celebration of the third millennium of Christianity, to foster a genuine spirit of repentance for "the acquiescence given, especially in certain centuries, to intolerance and even the use of violence in the service of truth." The Church, he added, bears an obligation "to express profound regret for the weaknesses of so many of her sons and daughters who sullied her face, preventing her from fully mirroring the image of her crucified Lord, the supreme witness of patient love and of humble meekness."

It is in this spirit that my brother bishops in Germany, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, issued a statement in which they took responsibility for the failure of the Catholic community during the Shoah. While mindful of the exemplary behavior of certain individuals and groups, some of whom I have already named, the German bishops acknowledge that "Christians did not offer due resistance to racial anti-Semitism. Many times there was failure and guilt among Catholics." And they go on to add a point with which I wholeheartedly concur: "The practical sincerity of our will of renewal is also linked to the confession of this guilt and the willingness to painfully learn from this history of guilt ...."25

My friends, as I draw these reflections to a close, I cannot help but reflect on the fact that I have spoken to an often tragic past in the history of Christian-Jewish relations here in this city of Jerusalem, which both of our religious traditions have always envisioned as ultimately a city of peace. In this context, let me lift up the powerful words of the Nobel Prize winners, including Elie Wiesel, who gathered with President Lech Walesa of Poland at the fiftieth anniversary commemoration of Auschwitz-Birkenau. "To the victims of this crime, we owe a commitment to the memory both of their death and their life," they proclaimed in their Appeal to the Nations of the World.

Their heritage must help mankind to build faith in a future free from racism, hatred and antisemitism... In equal measure, we owe a duty to the living to safeguard peace, tolerance, and fundamental human rights... Let instruments of governance be created which will guarantee the peaceful resolution of all conflicts.

As we reflect today on the legacy of antisemitism, Jews and Christians need to recommit themselves to counter its disturbing resurgence in North America, Latin America, and Europe, together with other forms of racism and inter-group violence. Here in Jerusalem, where the vision of peace may seem very far off at times, there is need to find ways to cooperate for the development of a genuine peace among Christians, Jews, and Muslims, Arabs and Israelis, that includes living faith communities with full opportunity for economic justice. Jerusalem, my brothers and sisters, cannot become a mere monument to peace. It must be

a true city of living communities of peace, a true Neve Shalom. That is my prayer. That is my hope. That is my dream!

#### Endnotes

- 1 Pontifical Commission Justitia et Pax: The Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1988, 34) (#24).
- 2 The Church and Racism, 23 (#15).
- 3 Pope John Paul II, "The Sinfulness of Antisemitism," Origins, 23:13 (September 5, 1991), 204.
- 4 Pope John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold, ed. by Vittorio Messori (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 96.
- 5 Edward Flannery, The Anguish of the Jews. Revised Edition. (New York/Mahweh: Paulist Press, 1985).
- 6 Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken, Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries. (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978); and Robert L. Wilken, John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
- 7 Anthony J. Saldarini, "Jews and Christians in the First Two Centuries: The Changing Paradigm," Shofar 10 (1992), 34.
- 8 Demonstration of the Gospel, I, I.
9. Edward Flannery, "Anti-Zionism and the Christian Psyche," Journal of Ecumenical Studies, 6:2 (Spring 1969), 174-175.
- 10 Uriel Tal, Christians and Jews in Germany: Religion, Politics and Ideology in the Second Reich, 1870-1914. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 305.
- 11 Cf. Eugene J. Fisher and Leon Klenicki (eds)., John Paul II on Jews and Judaism. (Washington, D.C. U.S. Catholic Conference, 1987).
- 12 Cf. The Pope Speaks, 29:3 (1984), 219-220.
- 13 Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994), #597; #839.

- 14 Arthur Hertzberg, The French Enlightenment and the Jews: The Origins of Modern Antisemitism. (New York: Schocken, 1968).
- 15 Cf. John T. Pawlikowski, "New Testament Antisemitism: Fact or Fable?" in Michael Curtis (ed.), Antisemitism in the Contemporary World. (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1986), 107-127.
- 16 Raymond Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple. (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 41-42. Cf. also, "The Passion According to John: Chapters 18 and 19," 1 Worship 49 (March 1975), 130-131.
- 17 Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "Response to Rosemary Ruether," in Eva Fleischner (ed.), Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era? (New York: Ktav, the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine and the Anti-Defamation League, 1977), 103.
- 18 Cf. Ronald Modras, The Catholic Church and Antisemitism Poland, 1933-1939, (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994).
- 19 Otto Dov Kulka and Paul R. Mendes-Flohr (eds.), Judaism and Christianity Under the Impact of National Socialism. (Jerusalem: The Historical Society of Israel and the Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1987).
- 20 For a description and analysis of the Thering study, cf. John T. Pawlikowski, O.S.M., Catechetics & Prejudice: How Catholic Teaching Materials View Jews, Protestants and Racial Minorities. (New York/Paramus/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1973).
- 21 Eugene J. Fisher, Faith Without Prejudice: Rebuilding Christian Attitudes Toward Judaism. Revised and Expanded Edition. (New York: The American Interfaith Institute and Crossroad, 1993).
- 22 Philip A. Cunningham, Education for Shalom: Religion Textbooks and the Enhancement of the Catholic and Jewish Relationship. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995).
- 23 U.S. Catholic Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, God's Mercy Endures Forever: Guidelines on the Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1988).
- 24 Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, "As the Third Millennium Draws Near," Origins, 24:24 (November 24, 1994), 411.
- 25 "Statement of the German Bishops on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Extermination Camp of Auschwitz," January 27, 1995, 1-2.