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Box 24, Folder 9, International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee meeting [Rome], 28-30 October 1985.

INTERNATIONAL LIAISON COMMITTEE

Rome, 28th October, 1985.

ALLOCUTION BY CARDINAL JOHANNES WILLEBRANDS

Your Eminence, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I, as President of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, extend my welcome to those here present, Jews and Catholics, to participate in the 12th meeting of the International Liaison Committee between the Catholic Church, represented by our Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, and the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC).

The present meeting is held in Rome, in the premises of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, which means that, in a certain sense, all of you are our guests. This circumstance, significant in itself, not only enhances the pleasure of receiving you, but also is closely linked to the main scope of the meeting itself.

We are, in effect, meeting in Rome now for the second time, because we wish to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the promulgation by the Second Vatican Council of the Declaration "Nostra aetate", the fourth section of which, as we all know, deals with the relationship between the Church and the Jewish community.

Today, 28th October, happens to be the very date when that document was approved by an extremely large majority of the members of the Council, and then officially pro-

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mulgated by Pope Paul VI and the Council, as reads the Latin formula of promulgation.

We are, therefore, in a way celebrating our birthday. It is true, of course, that the International Liaison Committee only took shape four or five years later, and only met for the first time in December 1971 in Paris. And the Commission now responsible in the Holy See for relations with the Jews came into existence in October 1974. However, it is quite obvious that it all began that 28th October. Where it not for that historic paragraph, in all its briefness, and notwithstanding the many critiques moved against it before and after its promulgation, we would not be sitting here this day to celebrate this 20th anniversary.

I believe that a lesson can be drawn from this.

Documents have always their limits, especially if they are envisaged from the point of view of those who are to receive them and with whom they are mainly concerned. Much less so, of course, if they are looked at from the perspective of those who have wrestled with the text, or texts, and the reactions thereupon, for many years. I was one of them and I think I know very well what this means.

On the other hand, when "Nostra aetate N.4" is read and pondered, 20 years after, as we intend to do on this occasion, what is in the minds of all of us, Catholics and Jews, are certainly not its limitations, if any, but its extraordinary value, in the light of the preceding attitude, or attitudes, practical and theoretical, in the Church, regarding Judaism.

If Jews, during the years elapsed, have better appreciated this newness and virtual uniqueness of the "Nostra aetate" text, we Catholics have come to see more how it

really conforms with a deeper strand of our tradition, and indeed with the Word of God in both Testaments. It would not be otherwise, if it was to be approved by an Ecumenical Council. Conciliar documents, as I am sure you all know, are held, in Catholic traditional teaching, to come ultimately from the Holy Spirit, who is assisting, illuminating and, if need be, correcting, the human process of reflexion and decision.

If, therefore, the Godhead is behind the text of "Nostra aetate", and also behind "Lumen Gentium" n.16 (which should not be forgotten in this connection), then the changed relationship with Judaism is not a question of practical decision, however noble and high flung our motivations may be for that. It is for us, as Catholics, a question of fidelity to our own vocation, a part of our response to God.

This is why there could never be question of drawing back from "Nostra aetate". There can only be a question about going forward.

Now, to go forward, as I am convinced we have done these last twenty years, one has to be sure of the starting point and constantly look back to it, to reaffirm its fundamental importance and draw inspiration from it.

One reason for the present meeting is precisely this one. We must, on this occasion, look back to "Nostra aetate", to reaffirm its fundamental importance and to draw renewed inspiration from it. We are all convinced of the fundamental achievement it meant for the Catholic Church, and also perhaps beyond, and of its permanent value.

Let us state a first conclusion from all this: Jewish-Christian relations in the Catholic Church are there to stay, grounded as they are, not on any transient phenomenon of any kind, much less on a kind of guilt complex (what unreliable foundation would that be!), but on a renewed consciousness of the "mystery" of the Church, as "Nostra aetate" starts by saying. Namely, they are grounded in theological convictions, which, for the Catholic Church is essential. We do not withdraw from such convictions. Our own identity would be at stake here.

Another conclusion I would like to draw is that what has happened since "Nostra aetate" is proof enough of the firmness of our resolve and the coherence of our decision. This is not the place to flood you with statistics or to list positive facts. I will only refer briefly to three significant items, which I believe are extremely revealing.

1. The first one is the constant engagement of the Holy See, and of the Holy Father himself, in reaching out to the Jewish community on the one hand, and in trying to make the Catholic community always more aware of the consequences of "Nostra aetate" on the other hand.

It is not only that the number of Jewish visitors to the Holy See and to the Holy father - groups and individuals - has grown enormously along the years. There is also the new development of the Pope meeting representatives of the Jewish community, wherever he happens to be going and where there is a Jewish community, willing to be received. This is what I meant by "reaching out". Obviously, in fact, such encounters are not limited to the person or persons involved, but have much larger, far-reaching consequences.

Regarding our own faithful, you are well aware of what has been done on the part of the Holy See. In twenty years we have published two documents, the "Guidelines" and the "Notes", with the precise aim of permeating all levels of the Church with the means and ways to arrive at a renewed presentation of Jews and Judaism in our teaching, but also, deeper still, in our own consciousness.

Now, these documents, each in its own time, have also been found to suffer from limitations. When, however, we look at the first one, the "Guidelines" of 1974, from the vantage point of time (exactly as we have done with "Nostra aetate"), limitations fade into the background, and what is left, and really matters, is the positive aspects of the text and the continuity with the Conciliar Declaration.

I believe exactly the same will happen with the "Notes", if it is not already happening, barely four month after its promulgation. It will be recognized, and this has already been said, on two points that may have seemed insufficient to some, that for the first time the Catholic Church, at the highest level, has told its catechists, its preachers and its teachers, to consider the religious link of the Jewish people with the land of their fathers as well as the existence of the state of Israel in the context of International Law, and to try to understand the meaning of the Holocaust.

2. And this brings me to my second example.

Our teaching on Jews and Judaism has already changed.

One recent survey, conducted by a group of experts in the USA bears the point. As I have said, I will not present statistics. I simply call your attention to the

the fact. Antisemitism is perhaps still alive. Regretfully it will take long to die out. But it becomes every day more difficult to have it linked with official, approved Catholic teaching. It may draw from other sources, secular or pseudo-religious, and this we have to assess carefully. But we all agree that it is another problem. And as we, in the Catholic Church, have a long experience of anti-Catholicism, coming from many sources, we can perhaps use this experience, as it has been done in certain places like the USA, to counter the antisemitic plague.

The responses we have received from different Catholic sources, written and oral, public and private, on the "Notes" are extremely revealing in this connection. Either we are told that such suggestions as we have offered are already being put into practice, but they are always welcome, or else we are informed of the willingness to pursue the path indicated, so as to be in complete accord with what has become official teaching of the Church. And this also in some particularly delicate fields, like, for instance, the relations between the First and the Second Testaments (Section I of the "Notes").

3. I come now to my third example, the last one, but certainly not the least.

I have referred above to the foundation on "theological convictions" of the new relationship between the Catholic Church and Judaism. And when some misgivings have been expressed about the "Guidelines" in their time and more recently about the "Notes" it has often been in the name of "theology".

a) Here I would like to make two points. First, "theology" is a pluralistic concept. The title of our Commission seems to me to hint to a certain theological dimension. It is in fact the Commission for religious relations with the Jews. "Religious" is normally taken to mean: "non-political". And this is true. But it is not all. There is something more which is positive, and not merely negative. And this I believe is precisely the rediscovery and translation into practice of the "link" or "bond" between our two "ways of life", grounded, as I believe, in the will of God. When I speak about "theology", I am not referring primarily to a rational, intellectual, reflection on the content of faith, but rather to the way we Catholics try to "walk humbly with our God" (Mich 6:8), according to our own convictions. In this sense, there is nothing in the Catholic Church which can be called

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"alien" to theology, much less Catholic-Jewish relations.

To put it briefly: either such relations do have, from our point of view, a real theological character, or they become an exercise in interreligious courtesy. This I would say of any interreligious dialogue, but it must be underlined much more strongly when it is a question of Catholic-Jewish relations.

And here we must sometimes be careful about what we mean with "theological" thinking when we feel that perhaps some statement or some document does not live up to certain "theological" standards. We have to be careful, I insist, not to confuse "accepted theological standards" in the Catholic Church with the personal theological opinions of some scholars, however respectable. These might be good or bad, as the case may be; but they are not, or not yet, "theological standards", which consist for us of the official teaching documents of the Church.

b) I am well aware, and this is my second point on this particular subject, that for many Jews "theology" and "theological dialogue" are problematic terms. I also think I know the reasons - too many sad memories are attached to these and similar expressions. And there is an extremely delicate and utterly respectable feeling that what happens in the realm of faith between God and the human person is not to be made the subject of a conversation with anybody.

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This I understand and respect. And I recall vividly, in this connection, a conversation I had in a New York hotel, the 8th March 1971, with Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, the venerable Jewish teacher of so many generations of Rabbis and, at least indirectly, of very many Jews at large. After having said what I just repeated, only in a more beautiful and moving way, he went on to say that, in any case, "all dialogue between Jews and Christians cannot but be religious and theological because - he continued - you are a priest and I am a Rabbi, can we speak otherwise than at the level of religion? Our culture is certainly a religious one". And then he referred, seeking my approval, which I was only too happy to give, to the permanent validity to both of us of the Books of the Old Testament, as a "source of hope".

* * *

On the occasion of this commemoration it is obvious that we are bound to speak also of what is still ahead of us. As I said before, there is no question of turning back, but only of going forward.

Yes, many fields could perhaps be enlisted in which, either on the Catholic or on the Jewish side, more progress could, and indeed should be expected. I do not think I am the one to start here the discussion on these points. I am sure the participants in this meeting will take up the subject in the following sessions. But I would like all the same, to stress two points in this connection.

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First of all, whatever shortcomings we may be guilty of, on either side, should be seen against the background not only of the progress already made in twenty years, which would be fairly obvious, but much more of the solid, rocklike foundations I referred to in the first part of this speech. Thus, we have at our disposal (I am speaking mainly about the Catholic side), nay in our minds and hearts, as Christians, the rationale and the moving force to go forward. In a certain sense it is only a question of putting into practice - or, if you wish, of coherence.

A second point is about this International Liaison Committee, meeting now in Rome. It is, I submit, the only official linking body we have between the Holy See and the Jewish community. Whatever its limitations, it is a symbol and an effective instrument of our relationship.

I believe we have still to ponder very carefully how we can make use of it to deepen, foster, apply in many walks of life, such relationship within the "terms of reference" agreed upon in December 1970, in the "Memorandum of Understanding".

I do not mean by that that we should enlarge its membership, or have it changed to become a forum for technical theological discussions, much less a kind of debating society meeting now and then on nice and less nice subjects. It is, in fact, the only place where we are able to meet as officially appointed Catholic and Jewish representatives (with the asymmetry which is so typical of our relationship), face to face, for three full days, well conscious of the responsibility the present state of our relationship places on our shoulders, on each side and on both together.

Of course, our respective freedom is not impaired and our respective identities should remain untouched and do so remain. Even when we are told that "consultations" should be held before doing this or that, or publishing such and such a text, we are all convinced that the final decision, on either side, rests solely with the body or bodies concerned, which may have, as is quite obvious, its own reasons, dependent on its own structures, and finally on its identity, to choose one or the other solution.

But having said as much, there is no question that we are linked for good, and that this "link" or "bond", for the Catholic Church rests on her own identity as Church. This we cannot ignore when we meet, and for the 12th time, in the International Liaison Committee.

Let us try to see very clearly where we are going, how we should move to get there and in which way we can already translate our relationship into concrete forms of collaboration towards all men and women, in a world torn by hate, violence, discrimination and also indifference for the poor, the sick, the elderly and the oppressed.

Our friends here present from different parts of the world, who have joined us for this specific occasion, might help us in the realization of this task before us.

* * *

Again, at the end of this already long introductory speech, I am bound to repeat that what I have turned to many times along this speech: we are not supposed to do this or that, or not to do it, in the field of Jewish-

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Christian relationship, out of any sense of expediency, or mere human convenience, but because we believe in the one God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and indeed Jesus Christ, and with all our differences, we have been brought together finally, hopefully for good, as Jacob and Esau did one day embrace and reconcile as brothers before God (as it is said in Gen. 33, 3-4). A text I would like to read as an appropriate conclusion to my speech, but at the same time perhaps as an inspiring starting point for our meeting:

"He himself (Jacob) went on before them (his wives and children), bowing to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept".



PRESS RELEASE: 12th Meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, Rome, Oct. 28-30, 1985

The International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee committed itself to a program of action for the immediate future. The six points of the program are: 1) to disseminate and explain the achievements of the past two decades to our two communities; 2) to undertake an effort to overcome the residues of indifference, resistance and suspicion that may still prevail in some sections of our communities; 3) to work together in combatting tendencies toward religious extremism and fanaticism; 4) to promote conceptual clarifications and theological reflection in both communities and to create appropriate forums acceptable to both sides, in which this reflection can be deepened; 5) to foster cooperation and common action for justice and peace; 6) to undertake a joint study of the historical events and theological implications of the extermination of the Jews of Europe during World War II (frequently called the "Holocaust" or, in Hebrew, Shoah). A steering committee will be established to work out the details of this program.

This, the twelfth meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, took place on October 28-30, 1985 at the offices of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity of the Holy See. The event was timed to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's declaration on the relationship between the Church and the Jewish people, Nostra Aetate, n.4. That document, whose Latin title, taken from its opening words, means "In Our Times", was promulgated on October 28, 1965, by Pope Paul VI together with the 2,221 Council Fathers.

The International Liaison Committee was founded in 1970 as a means of implementing the Council's call for the institution of ongoing dialogue between the Church and the Jewish people after centuries of mistrust and often tragic conflict. The Committee is composed of repre-

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sentatives of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews and of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC). (*)

Highlighting the event was an audience with Pope John Paul II on the afternoon of October 28th. Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, president of the Holy See's Commission, introduced the Liaison Committee to the Pope, who has met previously with its members on earlier occasions. Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, chair of IJCIC, hailed Nostra Aetate and subsequent papal statements as documents which had revolutionized Christian-Jewish relations and created new opportunities for dialogue. Rabbi Waxman pointed out that the creation of the State of Israel was likewise a revolution in Jewish history which calls for new thinking by both Catholics and Jews.

The Pope, for his part, reaffirmed the Church's commitment to Nostra Aetate and the uniqueness of the sacred "link" between the Church and the Jewish people which he called one of "parentage... stemming from the mysterious will of God". The Pope added: "I am sure you will work with even greater dedication, for constantly deeper mutual knowledge, for even greater interest in the legitimate concerns of each other, and especially for collaboration in the many fields where our faith in one God and our common respect for his image in all men and women invite our witness and commitment".

At the meeting of the Liaison Committee, Cardinal Willebrands and Dr. Gerhard Riegner of the World Jewish Congress assessed developments since the promulgation of Nostra Aetate. Both areas of remarkable progress and areas where further efforts toward understanding are needed were cited. Cardinal Willebrands declared: "Let us try to see very clearly where we are going, how we should move to get there, and in which way we can already translate our relationship into concrete forms of collaboration towards all men and women, in a world torn by hate, violence, discrimination and also indifference for the poor, the sick, the elderly and the oppressed".

Dr. Riegner stated: "On the eve of the meeting of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops which will review the achievements of Vatican Council II, we turn with confidence to its members. We are convinced that they will ensure... that the process of renewal of our relationship so hopefully initiated by the Council will be further advanced".

Dr. Eugene J. Fisher, Secretary for Catholic-Jewish Relations for the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Conference, presented a detailed analysis of Nostra Aetate in the light of the two major documents of the Holy See designed to implement its teaching: the "Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing Nostra Aetate, n° 4 (1975) and "Notes for the Correct Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church" (1985). The analysis revealed the dynamic and still developing character of the Church's continuing renewal in the light of its dialogue with the Jews as God's People. "Judaism, no less than Christianity, comes from God", Fisher concluded. "This was the central message of the Second Vatican Council, and one to which we Catholics must re-commit ourselves in each generation".

Dr. Geoffrey Wigoder, of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, presented a Jewish reaction to the Notes in which he analyzed both its positive aspects (e.g., on the Jewish roots of Christianity, the appreciation of the Pharisees) with those that had caused disappointment (e.g., the failure to appreciate deep levels of Jewish self-understanding and the inadequate treatment of the Holocaust).

From within the context of the self-understanding of the Catholic Church, Msgr Jorge Mejia, Secretary of the Vatican Commission, proposed some appropriate "hermeneutical keys" for the proper understanding of sections of the "Notes" which have raised problems of interpretation.

In the light of the exchanged views which followed these presentations, significant areas for further study and clarification were raised by the participants.

Regional reports were given on the status of relations between Catholics and Jews in Latin America, Europe, Israel, Africa and North America. These provided a survey of concerns on all levels of the relationship, from local communities to national and international perspectives. A special report was made by Sisters Shirley Sedawie and Margareth McGrath of the Congregation of ^{Our} the Lady of Sion on the work in Rome of SIDIC (Service International de documentation Judéo-Chrétienne) and the Congregation's centers in various parts of the world dedicated to fostering Catholic-Jewish reconciliation.

On the evening of October 30, the Liaison Committee attended a special symposium held at the Pontifical Lateran University to commemorate the 850th anniversary of the birth of the great Jewish philosopher Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides). Papers on the thought of Maimonides were presented by Rev. Jacques-Marcel Dubois, O.P., director of the department of philosophy of Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Rabbi Walter S. Wurzbarger, professor of philosophy at Jeshiva University in New York.

A list of the members of the Liaison Committee and of participants in the meeting is here attached.

(*) IJCIC, the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, is composed of the World Jewish Congress, the Synagogue Council of America, the American Jewish Committee, the Israel Jewish Council for Interreligious Consultations, and B'nai B'rith.

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Geneva, November 4, 1985

Int. J. 11/4/85

Rabbi Mordecai Waxman
Synagogue Council of America
327 Lexington Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016
U.S.A.

Dear Rabbi Waxman,

As you know, Rossano is now ready to print the joint volume which will contain a suitable selection of papers delivered at successive meetings of the Liaison Committee.

Could you please inform Rabbi Gordis that his paper on 'Religious Liberty - a Jewish perspective' delivered at Regensburg in 1979 has been selected for inclusion in the volume. I hope he will authorize us to publish it; should he have any editorial changes to suggest, we would need them as soon as possible.

With warm personal regards,

Yours sincerely,

Jean Halpérin
Jean Halpérin

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"Liaison Committee"
(Roma, 28-30 ottobre 1985)

Ex officio:

- S.Em. Cardinale Johannes Willebrands, presidente della Commissione
- R.P. Pierre Duprey, vice-presidente della Commissione
- Mons. Jorge Mejia, segretario della Commissione
- Mons. Erich Salzmänn

Membri dell'ILC:

- S.E. Mons. Gerald Mahon, vescovo ausiliare di Westminster
- R. P. Jacques-Marcel Dubois, OP
- R. P. Bernard Dupuy, OP
- Dott. Eugene J. Fisher

Invitati ad hoc:

- S.Em. Cardinale Roger Etchegaray, presidente, Pont. Commissione Iustitia et Pax
- S.E. Mons. Pietro Rossano, Rettore, Univers. Lateranense, consultore
- ~~S.E. Mons. Elemente Riva, Vescovo ausiliare di Roma (sarà sostituito)~~
- S.E. Mons. Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, Vescovo ausiliare di Kisangani, Presidente della Conferenza episcopale dello Zaïre
- ~~S.E. Mons. Francis J. Mugavero, Vescovo di Brooklyn~~
- ~~R. P. Edward Kaczynski, decano Facoltà di teologia, Pont. Univ. S. Tommaso~~
- ~~R. P. Marcello Zago, OMI, Segretario, Segretariato per i non-cristiani, consultore~~
- R. Prof. Angelo Tosato, consultore
- R. P. Ary Roest Crolius SJ, Prof., Pont. Univ. Gregoriana
- ~~Prof. Tommaso Federici, consultore~~
- R. Prof. Pierfrancesco Fumagalli, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milano
- Dott. M. Poorthuis, Secr. for Studies, Katholieke Raad voor Israel
- R. P. Thomas Michel SJ, specialista in Islam, Segr. per i non-cristiani
- Sr Margaret McGrath, SIDIC, Roma
- Sr Shirley Sedawie, SIDIC, Roma
- Signora Sofia Cavalletti, Comm. ecumenica Vicariato di Roma
- R.P. Charles Angell, S.A., Centro pro unione
- Rev.mo Mons. Luigi Gatti, Consiglio per gli AA.PP. della Chiesa

(25 ottobre 1985)

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pages*

12th Meeting,
International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee
Rome, October 28/30
1985

Jewish Participants:

✓-Rabbi Mordecai Waxman,	Chairman, IJCIC, Chairman; Synagogue Council of America, New York
✓-Mr. Fritz Becker,	Representative, World Jewish Congress, Rome
✓-Rabbi Gil Bernheim,	Personal representative of Chief Rabbi Dr. R.S. Sirat, Paris
✓-Chief Rabbi Pynchas Brener,	Co-chairman, Interreligious Affairs Commission, World Jewish Congress, Caracas
✓-Rabbi Balfour Brickner,	Synagogue Council of America, New York
✓-Prof. Leon A. Feldman,	Consultant, Synagogue Council of America, New York
✓-Mr. Mark Friedman,	World Jewish Congress, New York
✓-Chief Rabbi René Gutman,	Chief Rabbi of Belgium, Brussels
✓-Prof. Jean Halperin,	Consultant on Interreligious Affairs, World Jewish Congress, Geneva
✓-Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman,	President, Rabbinical Council of America, Lawrence, N.Y.; <i>Synagogue Council of America</i>
-Chief Rabbi Heszel Klepfisz,	Panama
✓-Prof. Emanuel Levinas,	Paris
✓-Landesrabbiner Natan P. Levinson,	Heidelberg; <i>representing International Jewish Council</i>
✓-Rabbi Jordan Pearlson,	Canadian Jewish Congress, Toronto
✓-Dr. Gerhart M. Riegner,	Co-chairman, Governing Board, World Jewish Congress, Geneva
✓-Rabbi Alexander H. Shapiro,	Representative , Rabbinical Assembly of America, South Orange, N.J.; <i>SCA</i>
✓-Rabbi Norman Solomon,	Director, Centre for Study of Judaism and Christian-Jewish Relations, representing Chief Rabbi Sir Emanuel Jakubovits, Birmingham
✓-Prof. Shemaryahu Talmon,	Chairman, Israel Jewish Council for Interreligious Consultations, Jerusalem
✓-Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum,	Director, International Affairs, American Jewish Committee, New York
✓-Rabbi Prof. Walter S. Wurzburger,	Professor, Yeshiva University; Past President , Synagogue Council of America New York
✓-Dr. Geoffrey Wigoder,	Institute for Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University, Jerusalem; <i>IIA, Jerusalem</i>
✓-Prof. Tullia Zevi,	President, Union of Italian Jewish Communities, Rome



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Rev. Isaac C. Rottenberg

November 13, 1985

TO: Media Contacts
Other Contacts
FROM: Isaac C. Rottenberg
SUBJECT: Attached Statement

On November 1, 1985, the Executive Committee of the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel, meeting in regular session, adopted an "Appeal" (see attached) to the Roman Catholic Bishops who will soon meet in Synod.

The Appeal was immediately sent to the three delegates from the U.S. who will be attending the Synod: John Cardinal Krol, Bernard Cardinal Law and Bishop James W. Malone, and is now made available for public information.

Contact: (Rev.) Isaac C. Rottenberg
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Rev. Isaac C. Rottenberg

FOR RELEASE ON NOVEMBER 15, 1985

November 1, 1985

AN APPEAL TO THE BISHOPS OF THE SYNOD

We greet you as you are about to meet in Synod in order to evaluate the progress in church renewal since the historic Vatican II Council. The National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel is a broadly-based network of American Christians who are concerned about the survival of a Jewish homeland and overall peace in the Middle East. We applaud the ground-breaking statement on the Church and the Jewish People in the declaration Nostra Aetate. We urge you to further implement this important statement on its 20th Anniversary.

The two decades since the end of Vatican II have seen an unprecedented growth in mutual understanding and respect between Christians and Jews. Pronouncements by Christian leaders throughout the world, including several key statements by Pope John Paul II, leave no doubt that the Church harbors a profound desire to rethink constructively its teachings and attitudes vis-a-vis the people Israel.

The Jewish Community has for the greatest part responded with extended hands to these new Christian gestures of reconciliation. At the same time, however, Jews have been troubled by the hesitancy of the Catholic Church to establish full diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. As Christians who, in accordance with the Vatican Guidelines for the Implementation of Nostra Aetate, have come "to understand Jews as they define themselves," we share in this sense of Jewish dismay over the continuing non-recognition.

We are pleased that the Vatican-Israeli relationship has taken some positive turns on the diplomatic level during the past decade. It is our conviction, however, that only full and complete relations will convince the Jewish community that the Church has finally cast aside once and for all its classical theology of the



Jews as perpetual wanderers on the earth as punishment for killing Christ and that Christians have come to understand how profoundly Israel is linked to contemporary Jewish self-identity.

Nostra Aetate has brought about the removal of the deicide charge from Christian educational materials. But Nostra Aetate also undercut any basis for the perpetual wandering theology. The implications of this aspect of the Council's work still await full implementation. There would be no more effective way for the Synod to bring this aspect of Nostra Aetate to the attention of the world than by urging the Holy Father to announce the Vatican's willingness to establish full diplomatic ties with Israel.

We are also convinced that such recognition would ultimately aid the peace process now underway in the Middle East. We earnestly pray that this process will succeed. The ever recurring cycle of violence must be stopped. We believe that a major obstacle to long-term peace is the lack of a clear statement that the existence of Israel is non-negotiable. Instead we hear continued calls for the destruction of the State of Israel.

The Vatican's gesture of establishing full diplomatic relations with Israel would serve as a powerful message to the world community: Israel is here to stay; it will not disappear. Only after such a clear and decisive acknowledgment by all parties can authentic negotiations toward peace begin.

SYNODAL SUCCESS

Written for the Newsletter of the
Association for the Rights of
Catholics in the Church (ARCC)

by

Leonard Swidler

The Synod was ~~not~~ a catastrophe, therefore it was a success! Given the Ratzinger's pope's and Cardinal's track records, the only possible purpose they could have had in mind in calling this Synod to evaluate Vatican II was to roll it back. Dissent, however, was loud around the world (e.g., Hans Küng's multimedia blast), and it had a two-fold effect: It caused Cardinal Ratzinger and colleagues to retrench their retrenchment aims; it strengthened, even emboldened, the progressive and moderate bishop delegates to foil the ancient Roman tactic of "divide et impera."

Further, a number of positive things happened at the Synod. The overwhelming majority of delegates decided to publish their Statement--knowing that, John Paul II jumped on the front of the bandwagon and "preveniently" announced the he would publish the Statement. Score one for shared responsibility! Score two, because the national bishops conferences were termed "useful, even necessary" (c-8). And score three, for this was the first time the term "co-responsibility" was used in an official Roman document: The nature of the Church is "participation and ought to be thought of in terms of co-responsibility in all its levels" (c-6). ARCC needs to help translate that into concrete local and national reality.

There were also some helpful words about besieged ~~and silenced~~ creative theologians, namely, not condemnation and silencing is what is needed, but, "a closer mutual communication and dialogue" (b-3). Is Cardinal Ratzinger listening?

Clearly one of the great battles was over Liberation Theology. The Latins, led by two Brazilian cardinals, came out swinging, and obviously won the day; the final Statement is a strong confirmation of the essence of Liberation Theology (d-6,7), including even a positive reference to "new base-communities" (c-6).

Not startling but at least encouraging things were said about women. (c-6).

Ecumenism (c-7) and interreligious, interideological dialogue were very strongly confirmed, stating clearly that ^{we} Catholics too stand to learn from our dialogue partners (d-5).

One of the most encouraging notes of the Synodal Statement was its acknowledgement that "the world is continually evolving," and hence we correspondingly need to continue to grow in our thought and action (d-7). That puts in, not a static, but a dynamic, world and Church. With that ARCC can live--and prosper!

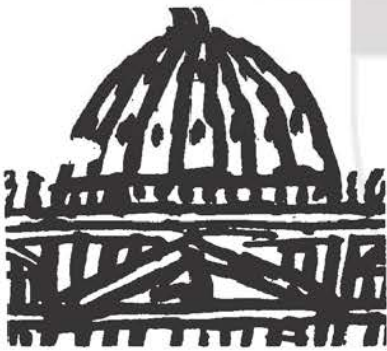


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WHY THE 'NOTES' WERE DISAPPOINTING



Jews & Catholics: taking stock

JUDITH BANKI &
ALAN L. MITTLEMAN

ON JUNE 24, 1985 — twenty years after the historic conciliar "Declaration on the Relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" (*Nostra Aetate*) — the Vatican issued a set of "Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Catholic Church." Immediately, the "Notes" drew sharp criticism from leading Jewish organizations. Their reception was accompanied by acute disappointment. Why did the Jewish leaders react in so critical a manner? An educated reader of an article in the *New York Times* (June 25), noting that the Vatican statement emphasizes the "Jewish roots of Chris-

tianity," condemns anti-Semitism, and calls for "objectivity, justice, and tolerance" might well have asked, "What in the world do the Jews want?"

What, indeed? The question can only be answered by understanding both the long and potent tradition of Christian anti-Semitism and the progress made in recent decades in confronting and correcting the teachings which fed that tradition. After World War II, provocative theological works by the Jewish scholar Jules Isaac and by Catholics such as Paul Demann set the stage for a searching reconsideration of fundamental issues. The 1950s and 1960s saw the undertaking, through the initiative of the American Jewish Committee, of landmark Protestant and Catholic textbook "self-studies" in the United States and Europe which documented the extent of anti-Jewish prejudice in teaching materials. The consolidation of these trends into a directed international movement for change in Catholic-Jewish relations occurred during the Second Vatican Council.

The council set forth the great themes of a new encounter between Catholics, indeed between all Christians, and Jews.

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Nostra Aetate affirms that "Abraham's stock" and the "people of the New Covenant" are not strangers to one another, rather they are linked by a mysterious "spiritual bond." The church continually "draws sustenance" from the root that is the people Israel. Given this abiding linkage, this common "spiritual patrimony," the council urged that "mutual respect and understanding" prevail. It envisioned that such respect would flow from joint biblical and theological studies and "brotherly dialogues."

The council laid out some principles which greatly facilitated the pursuit of these goals. First, it affirmed that the death of Jesus "cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today." "The Jews should not be presented as rejected or cursed by God. . . ." In one decisive sweep, the council rejected the pernicious, misconceived accusation of deicide which, more than any other misconception, led to Christendom's legacy of fratricide.

The council also took note of the Jewishness of Jesus and of the founders of early Christianity. Attention to the Jewish foundations of the church — a fact too easily obscured in the course of history — provided fertile subject matter for the joint-scholarly ventures recommended by the council.

These were auspicious beginnings. Although *Nostra Aetate* was significantly weaker in its final text than in earlier drafts, it nevertheless initiated a process which has forged a new Catholic tradition vis à vis Jews and Judaism. The tender shoots of this new tradition have emerged from dialogues, conferences, and scholarly studies; they have been nourished by networks of ongoing communication. Its fruits are evident in powerful declarations of national episcopal conferences, including the French, the Swiss, the American, the German, and the Brazilian.

Obviously, one cannot do justice to the depth and range of these disparate statements, forged over the course of almost twenty years; but they went further than *Nostra Aetate* in empathy and historical sensitivity and, taken together, reflect trends enormously heartening to Jews: a genuine expression of esteem for Jews and Judaism; a call for Christians to listen to how Jews define themselves; an admission of the anti-Judaic legacy of Christian theology and a commitment to reformulations; a call for Catholics to understand Jewish attachment to the State of Israel and the religious significance of Israel for Jews (while not necessarily accepting these positions as their own); a vision of Catholics and Jews as two pilgrim peoples "on the march." Added to this roster of progress, at least two study papers, probing theological aspects of Catholic-Jewish relations, suggested that the church should abandon efforts to convert Jews. A 1973 study paper of the National Catholic Commission for Relations with the Jews, Belgium, declared: "To insist that the church has taken the place of the Jewish people as salvific institution is a facile interpretation. . . . The Jewish people is the true relative of the Church, not her rival or a minority to be assimilated." A 1977 Vatican study paper by Professor Thomasso Frederici also renounced proselytization understood as coercion or manipulation and spelled out the church's commitment to dialogue. These study papers

were not doctrinally authoritative, but they seemed to point to the direction in which Catholic theological thought was developing.

Against this background, and on the basis of their own experience in Catholic-Jewish dialogue, Jews had every reason to expect that the Vatican "Notes" would be an unambiguous step forward toward mutual recognition as well as mutual esteem. Indeed, the "Notes" do make several steps in the right direction, but they also appear to take more than a few steps backward.

ONE OF THE considerable frustrations in evaluating this document lies in its *schizoid* nature. From a Jewish perspective, progressive affirmations in one section are undercut by regressive formulations in other sections. Inherently contradictory theological views of Judaism are papered over by expressions of noble intention. Speculation as to how the "Notes" were formulated, edited, and finalized is, perhaps, fruitless, but the document appears to reflect a tug-of-war between two incompatible mind-sets towards Jews.

On the positive side, the "Notes" affirm that "the Jews and Judaism should not occupy an occasional and marginal place in catechesis: Their presence there is essential and should be organically integrated." This "presence" is not that of a relic: Jews are a "still living reality," whose permanence in history, "accompanied by a continuous, spiritual fecundity," is "a sign to be interpreted within God's design." The acknowledgement of the vital, faithful existence of the Jews from antiquity to modern times is an important corrective to earlier teachings.

The section on the Jewish roots of Christianity should be particularly helpful to teachers and preachers. The "Notes" describe formative Judaism as a rich, diversified religion within which Jesus' life and work find a natural home. The historical record is set straight on the much maligned Pharisees. Beliefs and practices which Jesus and Paul shared with the Pharisees are specified in detail. If Jesus is severe toward them, "it is because he is closer to them than to other contemporary Jewish groups." The "Notes" make plain that many of the anti-Jewish references of the Gospels "have their historical context in conflicts between the nascent church and the Jewish community . . . long after the time of Jesus." Without doubt, this framework is a valuable step forward in



Catholic-Jewish relations. Although these themes appear in earlier documents, the "Notes" develop them in an intensive and heuristic way.

What is given by one hand; however, is taken back by the other. Almost every attempt in the "Notes" to provide some independent theological space for Jews and Judaism is countered by the reassertion of a traditional stance with which the new insights seem to be incompatible. Thus, in one section, "the permanence of Israel" is providential ("a sign to be interpreted within God's design"); in another, "Church and Judaism cannot then be seen as two parallel ways of salvation and the church must witness to Christ as the redeemer of all. . . ." The "Notes" clearly assert that Israel "remains a chosen people." But if one searches them to find in what Jewish chosenness consists, only one explicit reason is given: "to prepare the coming of Christ . . . notwithstanding their difficulty in recognizing in him their Messiah." (Much evidence of good will in the "Notes" notwithstanding, this preparatory function is the only reason explicitly given for Catholics "to appreciate and love" Jews.) Reflective of the same approach, the complex parting of the ways between the young church and the Jews is reduced to a simple "sad fact": the failure of Jews to believe in Jesus.

In one section, Jewish and Christian liturgical practices are compared in a balanced and objective manner: "Christians and Jews celebrate the Passover: the Jews, the historic Passover looking toward the future; the Christians, the Passover accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ . . ." Fair enough. In another section, however, "the Exodus . . . represents an experience of salvation and liberation that is not complete in itself. . . . Salvation and liberation are already accomplished in Christ and gradually realized by the sacraments in the church." Is this a statement that transmits Jewish self-understanding to Catholics?

After stating that Jews should "define themselves in the light of their own religious experience," the "Notes" immediately proceed to define the Jews in the light of traditional categories (e.g. promise and fulfillment) which tie Judaism to a procrustean bed of theological suppositions. By implication Judaism is presented as a failed religion. Judaism fails to save its adherents, fails to understand its Scriptures, fails to accept its Messiah. Its central and formative events (e.g. the Exodus) are incomplete. These manifestations of supersessionism subvert the intention of the "Notes" to learn and teach how the Jews define themselves, and reflect a strong triumphalist cast.

It is no wonder that Jews expressed disappointment with the document.

What is most disappointing about the "Notes" is precisely their failure to convey to Catholics "those essential traits" by which the Jews define themselves. The two great orienting events of modern Jewish experience — the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel — are given short shrift. The "Notes" appear to empty both events of a possible religious meaning for Christians. Moreover, what is unique to Judaism and to Jewish experience tends to get smothered by the "Notes" under the blanket of our "common spiritual patrimony." In an otherwise excellent passage calling for cooperation in the pursuit of social justice, human rights, and international reconciliation, Jews and Christians are said to have "one same memory and one common hope in him who is master of history." Without prejudice to whatever we may share in hope, Jews have a very different memory from Catholics. As Rev. Edward Flannery has said, Jews have learnt by heart those pages which Christians have torn from their history books.

These substantive problems aside, what probably most distressed the Jewish partners-in-dialogue with the Vatican commission was the lack of opportunity to respond to the "Notes" prior to their publication. Not all, but many of the objections to the document might have been resolved had there been consultation. In an attempt to calm troubled waters, Msgr. Jorge Mejia, Secretary of the Vatican Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews, issued a press statement concurrently with the publication of the "Notes." He specifically denied that the "Notes" intend to depict the Jewish people as superseded: "Of course, they can and should . . . draw salvific gifts from their own traditions." In an empathetic and forthright statement on the Holocaust, he noted its significance for Christians as well as for Jews. These clarifications are helpful; it's a pity they weren't part of the original document.

How will the "Notes" affect the progress of Catholic-Jewish relations? As with previous documents, much will depend on how they are implemented. Clearly, they provide rich opportunities for new advances in education and new insights in preaching. Do they also, as some Jews fear, represent a retreat to a pre-Vatican II theology of Jews and Judaism? The latter would seem unlikely in the light of two decades of scholarly advance and human interaction, but there are enough suggestions toward doctrinal retrenchment in the "Notes" to justify Jewish concern.

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Translation

OSSERVATORE ROMANO - February 17/18, 1986

THE PATH OF THE CHURCH TOWARD LIBERATION FROM RADICAL EVIL - ASCETIC PROGRAM OF LENT MUST HAVE ITS REPERCUSSION ALSO ON THE LEVEL OF SOCIAL JUSTICE - IF IT IS TRUE THAT MAN DOES NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, IT IS NEVERTHELESS TRUE THAT HE ALSO LIVES ON BREAD. THEREFORE THE NEED TO DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF THE POOR, THE HUMBLE, THE MARGINAL

We publish the text of the homily delivered yesterday afternoon, Sunday, February 15, by the Holy Father, during the mass celebrated at the Roman parish of Sant'Agostino in Campo Marzio:

1. "And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt" (Deut. 26,8)

Let us enter into the great Biblical issues of this Lent. The first is the freeing from bondage in Egypt, as we heard in the words of Liturgy. That issue is at the core of Easter of the Old Covenant. At the same time it leads us in a certain sense to the very core of the Easter mystery of the New Covenant.

With the expression "erring Aramaic" which we heard in our first reading, the sacred author refers to the history of Israel. The term "erring" recalls the idea that he searches for a way leading to a secure haven, to a country in which he will no longer feel a stranger and a pilgrim, but will fully live the hoped for freedom. God fulfils these aspirations: he redeems the people of Israel from Egyptian bondage, guides it to the Promised Land, introduces it to His Covenant and makes it His people.

In continuation, because of their many transgressions of the Covenant, God promises the chosen people a new Covenant, which will be sanctified with the blood of His own son Jesus on the Cross. The Church, expression of the New Covenant, represents the continuity of Israel, which wandered in search of salvation. This is the new Israel, which includes and surmounts the former, in so far as it has the necessary strength to live in correspondence with the demands of the divine Alliance, not through obedience to the ancient law which purveyed knowledge of but not salvation by God, but rather through faith in Christ the Saviour, our Easter, because it frees us of the bondage of sin and introduces us to the joy of familiarity with The Father.

2. Responsive Psalm is like a clamorous echo of the experience described in the first reading of Exodus. This resounds in Easter liturgy almost every day.

It is the song of an absolute loyalty to God, which liberates and supports whomever entrusts himself under His protection:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust." (Psalm 91, vv. 1-4).

In his path to God, each faithful, like the erring Aramaic, is a pilgrim advancing among risks and perils. (Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, v. 11 but the Lord frees him from these and leads him to salvation, to intimacy with Him, the aim of every pilgrim wherever he may be on earth.

3. The Gospel (Luke 4, 1-13) evidences clearly that the Church together with Jesus of Nazareth opens the Messianic path: the way which leads to the Messianic liberation of the New Covenant. It is the liberation from radical evil: from death and sin, linked to the Easter mystery.

The way to this liberation begins with the triple victory over temptation.

Temptation leads to sin. To overcome temptation means overcoming sin, so to say "from the root." Jesus overcomes the temptor in that same way. And teaches it to us.

Yes, from the root. And the root to which an end must be put is the I: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." (Luke 9, 23). Because, as long as an end is not put to man's egotism, which is always reborn, one cannot progress on the secret way of the New Covenant, the demands of which were so dramatically pointed out in the temptations of Jesus in the desert, where he rejected the seductions of man's egoistical affirmations in order to give himself fully to the divine plan. Renouncing the ambitions of his own self, he becomes able to adapt to The Word (it is written!), as expression of the Father's wish. In virtue of this "Word" Jesus overcame the temptation of independence from God: "man shall not live on bread alone" (Luke 4, 4); of 'miraculism' "If thou be God's son, cast thyself down from hence" (Luke 4, 9), and of the idolatry of power: "All this power will I give thee" (Luke 4, 6). Overcoming these three temptations, in which the people of Israel fell in the desert, Jesus gave us an example of how we should behave vis-à-vis the world's temptations.

Lent is an extremely useful time for listening to the Word and above all for the fulfilment of its demands that we exchange our old I for a new being, living not according to its own wish but the divine will, in order really to implant God's reign in our self. Only thus can one, following Jesus' example, overcome the ever returning temptation of a facile and accommodating Christianity.

4. The text of the second reading tells us that the cause of our salvation is the Paschal event fulfilled in Christ (vv. 8-9), and invites us not to repeat the sin committed by the Israelites in rejecting Jesus, but to hope for the Justice which comes from Him.

Israel looked to the night of Exodus and by that remembrance it stimulated its faith in God who saves.

The Church, with the Apostle, looks to the Easter Night and there finds stimulation to saving faith, the source of which is the Paschal mystery of faith: "If thou ^{shalt} confess... that Jesus is the Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. 10, 9).

IN ROME TOO THERE IS TODAY THE NEED TO FOLLOW, EVEN IF UPDATING IT, THE EXAMPLE OF SAINT PHILIP NERI, APOSTLE OF YOUTH. THE PHENOMENON OF YOUTHFUL DEVIATION DEMANDS AN INTENSE EFFORT OF PROMOTING THE MORAL VALUES OF THE FAMILY AND OF A SANE CONCEPTION OF LOVE BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN

...
3. The fulfilment of the Covenant, however, will not take place on Mount Tabor, although the Apostles had wished to set up three tents: one for Christ, one for Moses and one for Elijah (Luke 9; 33).

Mount Tabor is only the place of pre-announcement. The place of the Covenant will, however, be another mountain. On that one Christ will not be "glorified" in transfiguration, but "glorified" in the utmost degradation.

And then God, who concludes the Covenant with Abraham, reveals Himself in the very core. The descendancy of Abraham, born through faith, will be welcomed by the word and the power of the Covenant in the blood of God's Lamb; that Covenant will last till the end of the world.

4. During Lent the Church, leading us to the Mount of Transfiguration, prepares us for the Mount of Crucifixion. As a matter of fact, in Christ's Crucifixion the Transfiguration will be fulfilled, to which all of us are called by the word and the love of the God of Covenant.

This call comes from the times of Abraham; but it clears gradually, and gradually it finds its place in the history of salvation. On Christ's Cross it reaches its full light and its definitive fulfilment. Indeed, Christ resurges in the same place in which he was crucified. What the Apostles had seen fleetingly on Mount Tabor has become a permanent truth of the new and eternal Covenant of God with humanity.

5. This is the Paschal reality. During Lent we are called particularly to enter into paschal reality. It is entirely in Christ. At the same time, it is all for us. It must embrace us as the cloud approached Peter, Jacob and John on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9;34).

The definitive word of God of Covenant is that very light: the Paschal truth which is destined and offered totally to man.

6. Therein lies the definitive fulfilment of the truth concerning the Land promised Abraham and his descendants. That land becomes for many generations the fatherland of the People of the Old Covenant.

However the God of Covenant does not fulfil his promise in any single terrestrial country. In no temporal habitat. And no temporal condition of human existence can fulfil God's promise in reference to all those who, together with Christ, were involved in Paschal mystery.

What does Paul write:

"Brothers, our country* ... is in heaven; whence also we look for thy Saviour, the Lord Jesus. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phl. 3; 20-21).

7. We are therefore called to intimacy with God of Covenant in the fullness of his promise. To the very core, to the definitive fulfilment. We are called upon to live in the prospective of this faith which, maybe, Abraham did not yet know, but which revealed itself fully to us in Christ Crucified and Resurrected.

...



* PATRIA in the homily, 'conversation' in St. James Bible.