

CD-1094 Transcription

20th anniversary of Vatican II - A Jewish perspective,

Rockhurst College [2]. 5 May 1986.

Maurice Van Ackerin:

-- we will hear for our lecture. And it's our great pleasure tonight have Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum with us this evening. As Father Dawes mentioned, this lecture was scheduled for November. But it was rescheduled due to his illness at the time. A lot of things have been going on in the Catholic-Jewish world, as you read in the paper day after day, especially highlighted by the Holy Father's visit to the synagogue in Rome, and praying with the rabbi there. It was a touching occasion, and one which has stirred a lot of fine feelings among both groups. Rabbi Tanenbaum was here [01:00] in 1963, and that's before the Council. And we were looking at some accounts of that seminar or symposium we had at that time, and it was very interesting to recall that.

Marc Tanenbaum:

That's the best sign of all of your hospitality, skimmed bourbon for a rabbi. Father Dawes, Father Van Ackerin, Bishop Helmsing, I'm not sure that I see you here tonight. We were together at dinner, but -- here we are. Rabbis who are with us in the

audience, and just plain God's people. This is a very special moment for me, [02:00] for deeply personal, as well as professional reasons. As Father Van Ackerin indicated, it was here in this building in January of 1963, literally several months after the first session of Vatican Council II was commenced by the late blessed Pope John XXIII, that this college, in my judgment, with extraordinary courage and vision, undertook to sponsor the first national colloquium on Catholic-Jewish relations [03:00] in the United States. And I want to pay tribute here to Bishop Helmsing, who had the vision and the fortitude together with them, his aide Monsignor William Baum, who undertook to make that conference possible. Of course you know what happened to Monsignor Baum. For his courage and vision, he now is a cardinal in Rome, Cardinal William Baum, in charge of a major congregation in the curia. And every time I see him, we always end up talking about this conference in 1963 at Rockhurst College. And so I want now to acknowledge with much appreciation to Father Weiss, the president of this college, [04:00] as well as to Father Dawes, and others who are here this evening, for providing me the opportunity for a kind of homecoming, a kind of roots experience. Because in fact, in the early days of Vatican Council II, when Catholic-Jewish relations was not exactly a flourishing business, and there weren't too many stockholders around on either side investing in it, that it

was extremely important for those of us who were prepared to risk our careers and our private fortunes, as it were, on the possibility that there could be a significant change in relationship between Catholics and Jews, to know that there were Bishop Helmsings, and Monsignor Baums, and people from the Jewish community [05:00] who were prepared to take those first, tremulous steps on this rather extraordinary journey. I suppose I should say a word of explanation on why it is, at least from my understanding, somewhat kabbalistic, I think, why it is that the pattern of this series began with Father Avery Dulles, a very distinguished Catholic theologian who happens to be a good friend, with whom too we had began early discussions at Woodstock College, that great Jesuit school of blessed memory. And then Dr. Jaro Pelikan, who has been a longtime, wonderful friend, and one of the very great Protestant scholars, a Lutheran Church historian, who studies now, as they come off the press, volume after volume [06:00] that represent landmark works. And you end up in this series with a rabbi representing a Jewish reading of Vatican Council II, *Nostra Aetate*, 20 years later. I suppose the best explanation for it has to do with some kind of historical justice. There is a wonderful story told about the late Pope John XXIII, after he served as the apostolic delegate to Istanbul in the Balkans during World War II, he was appointed by the Pope the apostolic delegate to France. And

there's a wonderful story that makes the rounds in France, that when Pope John XXIII, before he was elected to the papacy, was serving in Paris, that he and the chief rabbi of France, Rabbi Jacob Kaplan, became very good friends. [07:00] And they were invited at one point to attend a governmental dinner, banquet at the Élysée Palace. I don't know whether it was de Gaulle or one of his friends, was prime minister at the time. But in any case, they were at this very gala banquet in the Élysée Palace, and they were standing together talking, and I suppose drinking non-sacramental wine together. And at one point, the bell rings for everybody in the hall where they were having the reception, being asked to come into the dining room to have dinner together. And as the account has it, Monsignor Roncalli, the apostolic delegate, and the chief rabbi come to the door, which is the entrance into the banquet hall, and so Monsignor Roncalli turns to the chief rabbi and says, "After you, Chief Rabbi, Your Excellency." And the chief rabbi [08:00] turns to Monsignor Roncalli and says, "No, Your Excellency, after you." And they go through this Alphonse and Gaston routine for about five minutes, and each one of them is beckoning to the other to proceed. And finally, Monsignor Roncalli, in his wonderful earthy Italian peasant style, grabs a hold of the chief rabbi's arm, and he says, "Sir, the Old Testament before the New Testament," and shoves him into the banquet. So I guess by way of balances and

symmetry, he brought in the Old Testament at the end of the service to balance out the aversion of the (inaudible, coughing.)

I have written a paper which will be published as a Jewish evaluation of 20 years after *Nostra Aetate*. It's 41 pages long. If I were to read this, nobody would be taking any exams at the end of this week, [09:00] which may not be such a bad idea. But rather than put you through the ordeal of this rather carefully wrought paper, which seeks to deal with Vatican Council II in terms of its meaning in theological, historical, Biblical terms, sociological terms, I want to devote my remarks this evening to a somewhat different perspective. A somewhat personal statement of why I believe Vatican Council II, in promulgation of the Vatican declaration *Nostra Aetate*, the Vatican declaration on non-Christian religions, side by side with other great declarations on religious liberty, ecumenism, the Church in the modern world, [10:00] were of historic importance, indeed to the Church, the Church's identity, the Church's relationship to the modern world, but why I believe that this declaration and relationships between Catholics and Jews, Christians and Jews generally, but specifically Catholics and Jews, are of fundamental importance to the future survival of God's human family.

Let me begin by telling you, in somewhat abbreviated autobiographical ways, my own encounter with *Nostra Aetate*, and the almost shattering effect it had on me during the course of the time that I was privileged to be in Rome as a guest of the late Cardinal Sheehan of [11:00] Baltimore, who was then the Chairman of the Catholic Bishops Commission on Ecumenism and Interreligious Relationships, and the late Augustin Cardinal Bea, who was the great architect, literally the genius who fought through an extraordinary struggle to bring about the adoption of *Nostra Aetate* and the Vatican declaration on ecumenism and religious liberty. My story begins with the fact that I'm the son of Russian immigrant parents. My parents came, thank God, of all places, from the Ukraine. Came to the United States in the early 1900s, leaving behind them incredible poverty, pogroms, vicious [12:00] hatred, anti-Semitism. They came the United States impoverished and settled in the city of Baltimore. After they had set themselves up with a very modest general store, which enabled them to take care of their children and raise their family, my parents were very pious, Orthodox Jews. And it was the family practice that on the Sabbath day, after we would return from services, because they were pious Jews we walked to services, and our small synagogue was something like 22 blocks away from our home, so we would walk to

the synagogue and then come home, we would have lunch together. And the practice in our family, as was the case with many ethnic families [13:00] I'm sure, my parents would begin becoming nostalgic about their *alter haym*, the old home country. I've heard Irish parents talk about the old home to their children, and Italian parents, and Greeks. Well that's what my parents used to do on a Saturday afternoon, among other discussions. Now this was a Sabbath afternoon on the eve of Holy Week, and on the eve of the Jewish observance of Passover, which then were virtually coinciding. And suddenly, as we were talking about preparations for Passover, my father turned to my brother, my sister, and myself, and he said, "I remember now what happened on *erev Pesach*, the beginning of Passover. In our small village in the [Minuthka?] in the Ukraine," -- it was a predominantly Jewish village of 200-300 people who clustered [14:00] together in their poverty. He said, "On that day of Good Friday, down the road from us, on that dusty, unpaved road, there was a Russian Orthodox church." And on that Good Friday morning, apparently, as the Russian Orthodox priest was going through the ritual of the Passion, and apparently entered into the liturgy regarding the role of the Jews in the Crucifixion. He suddenly became carried away with very deep feeling about how the Jews crucified Christ, our Lord and Savior. And suddenly his sermon became an incitement. And that congregation, celebrating the Good Friday

liturgy, became a howling [15:00] mob, my father said. They left the congregation, and he remembered it as clearly as his childhood. And he said, "As we saw down the road and heard the noise, that mob began marching down that road toward our village, carrying rocks and sticks. They were led by the Russian Orthodox priest with a pectoral cross glinting in the sun." And he remembered him marching with the staff. They came to my grandfather's house. My grandfather was apparently called a *staroster*, which was the Russian word for a kind of de facto mayor. He was assigned by the czar's people to collect taxes for the czar from the Jewish villagers, and also to recruit Jewish young children for military service, which usually ended up being 25 years of service in the czar's army. "And then," my father said, "and then [16:00] that congregation of Russian Orthodox Christians came to my father's house," my grandfather's house, his father's house, and there were words exchanged between them. And then the priest demanded that everybody in the house come outside, stay in front of the house with my grandfather. And then the priest pointed his staff at my uncle, whose name was Aaron. He was a poet, 32 years old, who had come to visit with the family for Passover, to celebrate the Passover Seder. And then that entire congregation of Russian Orthodox Christians compelled all of the Jewish villagers to come to the edge of the lake, around which the village was constructed. And



there, in the presence of that whole Jewish community, the priest, together with that Christian congregation, forced my [17:00] Uncle Aaron to walk into the lake until the water covered his hands, and they screamed at him, with the priest leading him, "This Jew we offer up as a ransom for the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior. These [*ruska morda?*], godforsaken Jews." And the entire village stood there, traumatized, as my Uncle became a sacrifice for the Crucifixion. When my father told us that story without embellishment, I became traumatized as a child. I mention that we walked to the synagogue every Sabbath and holy day. As we walked every Sabbath, every holy day, passed a church [18:00], whether it was Methodist or Presbyterian, or Catholic, or Evangelical, if the door of the church was open, my father intuitively would take our hands and walk us across the street, because he feared that we would look inside the church, we would see the Crucifix, and to him, it was not Jesus on the cross who was being crucified; it was Jews who were being crucified. He had a line that he had read at a Jewish writer, Israel Zangler, who once wrote, "The people of the cross have made the Jews a cross among the people." My involvement in Christian-Jewish relations, which began during my seminary days, in fact became an act of conversion for me. [19:00] Because in my early childhood, even though I played with Christian children in our neighborhood,

Italian, German, Polish, I began my life fearing Christians. When I would hear Christian preachers on the radio talk about the Gospel of Love, I did not understand what they were talking about. Because what was a Gospel of Love for them became a Gospel of Hatred that led to the murder of my uncle. And I couldn't understand who were the real Christians. What was the relationship with proclamation, with deeds and behavior? And so for many years, I walked with a deep sense of suspicion as to when I was going to be hurt by these people who had murdered my uncle.

October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1965. [20:00] The Basilica of Saint Peter's. The Basilica is packed with some 2,500 Council Fathers, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, periti, theological experts, from the entire inhabited world. I am standing in the awl of Saint Peter's Basilica with a colleague of mine who recently past away, Zach Shuster, bless the memory. And I see Augustin Cardinal Bea, a German Jesuit, president of the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity, president of the Vatican Secretariat on Catholic-Jewish Relations, arise before that greatest seminar in Catholic-Jewish relations, and 2,000 years of history. And before the entire [21:00] leadership of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the inhabited world, he begins in his [relazio?], saying the following, his introduction to the

Jewish declaration. "I can only begin with the fact that this declaration certainly must be counted among the matters in which public opinion has shown the greatest concern. Scarcely any other schema has been written up so much and so widely in periodicals. Many will judge the Council, good or bad, by its approval or disapproval of the declaration." And then he went on, as Bishop Helmsing can tell you from his own presence, then he went on to talk about the main themes of that declaration, *Nostra Aetate*. And then, on October 28<sup>th</sup>, Pope Paul VI proclaimed *Nostra Aetate* [22:00] to the world. And I stood there, and heard the Pope, Cardinal Bea, proclaiming these words: "As this sacred synod searches into its own mystery, and discovers the common patrimony which binds the Church to the Jewish people, this sacred synod rejects all hatred, all prejudice, all anti-Semitism against the Jewish people by anyone at any time, at any place, as being incompatible with the spirit of Christ and of the Gospels. This sacred synod rejects the teaching of the collective guilt of the Jewish people as being responsible for the death of Jesus." And then the declaration goes on to say [23:00] that it advocates the achievement of mutual respect through fraternal dialogue and Biblical studies between the Catholic Church, members of the Catholic community, and the Jewish people. And as I stood there, I have to tell you exactly as it happened to me, there was only one image that came to my

mind, and I began to cry like a baby. I saw my Uncle Aaron going into the water of that lake, and I had the terrible conviction that somehow, had *Nostra Aetate* been adopted 200 years ago, 100 years ago, my Uncle Aaron would still be living. And probably tens of thousands of other Jewish people who were destroyed in the Nazi Holocaust, [24:00] many by people who considered themselves good Christians, but who believed in all of these ancient themes of contempt, of rejection of Jews and Judaism. It was a wrenching experience, but it was for me a purgation. It was a sense that somehow history had come full cycle, and that a new culture began to emerge, like Gresham's law, driving out an ancient bad culture. I have to say to you, in all candor, that I found it difficult to believe that it was possible for an ancient tradition, grounded in biblical values and ideals, somehow to have become seized so that certain marginal traditions could have led to the very contradictions [25:00] to the spirit of the Gospel.

This past October, I had the rather mixed experience of being asked by the Jewish community of South Africa, as well as by the State Department, to join a mission of four Jewish leaders to go to South Africa. And that mission helped me understand something about Catholic-Jewish relations that I had not experienced. I needed that objectivizing from the outside. We spent 10 days in

South Africa. We met, at the request of our government, whose policies haven't exactly sent me into elation, with constructive [26:00] engagement, but there are some very good Americans in South Africa trying to help bring about peaceful change. We met with everyone in South Africa who was a significant player in the unfolding events in that country. With the Bothas, the prime minister, the foreign minister, with members of the Cabinet, with Archbishop Tutu, with Buthelezi, with leaders of the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, black leaders, Indian leaders, colored leaders, people in the business community and the labor community. The most difficult experience out of all of that, to make sense out of it, was going into the black homelands, especially in Soweto. We came into Soweto the second day we were there, and we saw truckloads of what were called hippos, these armed personnel carriers, filled with young [27:00] Afrikaners, most of them right off the farms, most of them, we were told, very devout Dutch Reform Christians. People, 18, 19, 20 years old, raised in church schools, who went to church every Sunday, to Bible classes regularly. And these people were raised by a fundamental religious idea, namely that Apartheid is the will of God. Underlying the Apartheid system was a fundamental theological assertion that there is such a thing, in sacred scriptures, called the Curse of Ham, that God cursed the children of Ham, the black children of Ham, that

their blackness in fact is a sign of God's rejection of them, and they are an inferior people. And the whole Apartheid system [28:00] was to be constructed with a view toward translating God's will about their inferiority into social, political, economic structures. They were to be segregated, because the White Man, the chosen people, of the Dutch Reform Church, were regarded as the superior people to carry out God's will in constructing that society, that promised land, and the black people, all 23 million of them, were rejected by God, and were therefore to be abandoned and humiliated by man. And so they were then forced to the ghettos, their homelands. Forced to carry passes, identity cards. They could not walk in the streets unless they proved their identity with a pass law. Last year alone, a quarter of a million black natives of South Africa were arrested because they walked out into the street without their passports, their pass laws. Now, finally, rejected by the [29:00] government. And I said to myself, how is it possible, here is a country that is the most advanced country on the whole continent of Africa, more science, more technology, more universities, than the whole of Africa. A country that is wealthier than the whole of Africa, the rest of the continent. A country that is supposedly more religious in some ways, than many of the countries. Based on essentially a religious myth, and forgive me, a religious lie, a fundamental untruth, a

blasphemous idea the God's children of black skin are inferior human beings, and deserve to be treated as if they are subhuman, dehumanized. And I must say that out of my Jewish experience, I think I was able to penetrate into an understanding [30:00] in the sense of humiliation and dehumanization of blacks. Because as it occurred to me, and I don't want to make moral equivalencies, but the deicide charge, the notion that the Jewish people were collectively guilty for the death of Christ, that they were punished by God, rejected by God, became the wandering people, the wandering Jews, never to have a homeland, and that they were to wander until the end of time, suddenly became clear to me in that kind of mirror image that may well be that there was some comparability between people being able to believe in something which runs across everything we know of logically, humanly, rationally. In any case, it was [31:00] because of the power of my own experience as a child, with what hatred could lead to, that my coming to Rome during the course of the time of Vatican Council II, when the texts were being discussed during the three sessions of the Council, especially during that last session, that I had developed a whole new appreciation of what a profoundly transforming meaning *Nostra Aetate* began to have. And *Nostra Aetate* began to establish the major principles of what it meant to rectify relationships between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people. What it meant

to place in historic and theological clarity, the relationship between the origins of Christianity, its rootedness in Jews and Judaism. And what it meant [32:00] to disencumber ourselves from the myths, the ideation of barnacles that accumulated over the centuries, and to try to see ourselves, fresh and clear, in the light of the best knowledge that the whole revolution in Biblical, theological, historical, liturgical studies, had begun to uncover for us.

What I believe *Nostra Aetate* began to face was the reality that for the greater part of the past 1,900 years, there has existed a profound ambivalence on the part of the Church, on the part of Christianity, toward Jews and Judaism. An ambivalence which is reflected in this kind of polar expression. I don't think it's known certainly to many Jews, probably not to many Christians, that there was an affirmative side on the part of some of the Church [33:00] fathers, in their attitudes toward Jews and Judaism, which was simply overwhelmed by a contrary tradition. Thus, Saint Athanasius, one of the early Church fathers at the beginning of the fourth century, declared in these words, which I quote, "The Jews are the great school of the knowledge of God and the spiritual life of all mankind." Saint Jerome, who lived in the fifth century, who spent 40 years in Palestine, where in Caesarea he studied with Jewish scholars and Biblical



authorities, studied holy scriptures. The masoretic traditions. Rabbinic interpretations of the meaning of the Bible. And from those joint, early Biblical dialogues with Jewish scholars in Palestine, he obtained insights on which he based his translation of the Scriptures into the Latin vulgate. In fact, [34:00] today there are Jewish scholars who study the Latin vulgate to find out what some of the rabbis of the fifth century were teaching. Saint Jerome preserved some of those traditions in the Latin vulgate. And he declared that the Jews were divinely preserved for a purpose worth of God. And this side of the affirmative attitude of the Church toward Jews reflected the tradition of Saint Paul, in Romans 9:2:11, which speaks of Christians being engrafted onto the olive tree of Israel planted by God. This tradition also found expression in positive behavior of popes even in the Middle Ages, the Dark Ages as they were called. Thus Pope Callixtus II issued a papal bull in 1120, beginning with the words [*si quod Judaeus?*] in which he strongly condemned the forced baptism of Jews, acts of violence against their lives and property, and the desecration of synagogues [35:00] and Jewish cemeteries. Pope Gregory IX issued a papal bull [*et seu deorum?*] in 1233, in which he demanded that the Jews in Christian countries should be treated with the same humanity as with which Christians desired to be treated in heathen lands. Side by side with that tradition, there existed a

tradition of hostility and contempt, which I referred to. The late French historian, Professor Jules Isaac, wrote about this teaching of contempt in several of his studies, one of them *Jesus and Israel*, another called *The Teaching of Contempt*. That tradition of teaching of contempt was perhaps most explicitly embodied in the eight sermons of Saint John of Chrysostom, who in the year 1387 spoke from the pulpits of the city of Antioch, to the first congregation of early Gentiles, who became Christians, saying these words, and I have to say here, the way it is said now [36:00] on television and films, this is R-rated stuff, and those of you who have gentle souls have to prepare yourself for this kind of rhetoric, and don't expose your children to it without parental observance. Saint John wrote, and Saint John was the golden tongued orator -- Saint John wrote, "Out of the conflict of the early Church and Synagogue in the first four centuries, I know that a great number of the faithful have for the Jews a certain respect, and hold their ceremonies in reverence. This provokes me to eradicate completely such a disastrous opinion. I've already brought forward that the Synagogue is worth no more than the theater. It is a place of prostitution. It is a den of thieves, and a hiding place of wild animals. Not simply of animals, but of impure beasts. God has abandoned them. What hope of salvation have they left? They say that they too worship God, but this is not so.

None of the Jews, not one of them, is a worship of God. [37:00]  
Since they have disowned the Father, crucified the Son, rejected the Spirit's help, who would dare to assert that the Synagogue is not a home of demons? God is not worshipped there; it is simply a house of idolatry. The Jews live for their bellies. They pray for the goods of this world. In shamelessness and greed they surpass even pigs and goats. The Jews are possessed by demons; they are handed over to impure spirits. Instead of greeting them and addressing them as much as a word, you should turn away from them, as from a pest in a plague of the human race." Now those polemics grew out of the encounter between the early Church and Synagogue, and there are historical reasons to explain why the intensity of that polemic took place, but not to excuse it. The Church, once it broke its bonds with the early Synagogue, and sought to evangelize the Roman Empire, began [38:00] a process of de-Judaizing itself, began a process of seeking to win the favor of the Romans and the Greeks and the Persians and the Parthians. And the way of doing that was to distance themselves from the Synagogue, out of whose womb the Church had come. So the Jewishness of Jesus was deemphasized, and in relation to the Crucifixion story, the Jews were made collectively guilty for the death of Jesus, and Pontius Pilate, especially in the Orthodox tradition, was made into a saint. There is in fact a Saint Pontius Pilate Day, observed in a

Coptic calendar, especially in Arab countries today. So much for the exigencies of the impact of history on theology. Frequently, the events of history overwhelm possibilities of theological assertions of the truth.

So as one thinks back on that tradition, [39:00] which existed for century after century after century, which led to such destruction, the demonization of the Jewish people, the delegitimization of Jews, the dehumanization of Jews, what has happened since the adoption of *Nostra Aetate* is little short of a miracle. Since 20 years ago, thanks -- and I really think it is the act of God -- the selection of Pope John XXIII, his great Christian soul and spirit, and those who clustered about him, he faced the reality of what these polemical traditions have done, indeed to the Jews but also to the Church and the Church's own integrity. The Church's own ability to proclaim itself, the Gospel of love and reconciliation. [40:00] Pope John XXIII, when he was Monsignor Roncalli, serving in the Balkans, was himself traumatized by what he saw this tradition doing to people whom he thought were members in good standing in the Christian faith. He saw as he went through the Balkans, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, people who went to church on Sunday, came out of church and put on Nazi uniforms, or Iron Guard, or Iron Cross uniforms, and then went out to round up thousands of Jewish

children and hand them over to the Nazis for certain deportation to death in Auschwitz. I was told by an American involved in wartime relief effort, Ira Hirschmann, who represented the United States Relief Effort, together with other nations, that he came to [41:00] the late Pope John XXIII when he was Monsignor Roncalli in Istanbul, told him that there were then about 3,000 or 4,000 children who had been rounded up in the Balkans, and were being prepared for shipment in cattle cars to Auschwitz. Roncalli was told that there were many people involved in the life of the Church, or at least people who felt close to the Church, attended services. And the Pope, as Ira Hirschmann told me, found it mindboggling. He could not believe that people who regarded themselves as committed Christians could participate in such savage behavior. And as Hirschmann tells the story, and records it in a book, when Ira Hirschmann turned to him and said to Governor Lehman, that Senator Lehman [42:00] asked for his help, and the Chief Rabbi of Ireland, Herzog, begged for his assistance, that without hesitation, Monsignor Roncalli called in an aide, and he wasn't sure about canonical law, and thank God he was that libertarian about it -- called in an aide and asked that Catholic baptismal certificates be made out for 3,000 to 4,000 Jewish children. And those certificates were handed to each of these children, their families, their parents. There are 3,000 to 4,000 Jewish

children who are alive today because of the Christian soul of Pope John XXIII, who found it incompatible to affirm his own convictions as a member of the Church, and to allow that kind of behavior to go on, which contradicted [43:00] everything that Christ and the Gospels and the Church presumed to stand for. And so, when Monsignor Roncalli became Pope John XXIII, one of the first acts he undertook was to uproot this tradition, which he regarded as marginal to the main affirmations of love and reconciliation of the Church. In his own conscience, he found it incompatible that one could call oneself a Christian and an anti-Semite at the same time. They simply were dissonant, impossible to reconcile them and claim credibility for those claims for the Christian Church today. And so the stories began to mount. And they were extraordinary stories. Also on Good Friday, standing in Saint Peter's Basilica, celebrating the Mass, in a church that is packed, there was a prayer that went back to [44:00] prior to Vatican Council I, A Prayer for the Conversion of the Perfidious Jews. He stopped the prayer in the middle of the Mass, and said this prayer is no longer acceptable in Catholic liturgy. It will never be recited again in this church, and should not be recited in churches anywhere in the world. And from that day on, the Prayer for the Conversion of the perfidious Jews came to an end.

Some of you know about the meeting on April 13, just several weeks ago, in Rome. In the great synagogue on the Tiber River, Pope John Paul II became the first Pope in 1,900 years of history to travel that mile from Vatican City to the great synagogue on the Tiber. [45:00] It was an extraordinary meeting. And I want to devote the rest of my remarks to that experience, because it brings us to where we are today, and what the possibilities are for the future. But the connecting point is that the Pope, when he began his address to that packed synagogue, as the guest of the Chief Rabbi of Rome, as the guest of the President of the Italian Jewish Community, who, sisters please note, is a woman, by the name of Mrs. Tullia Zevi, and the President of the Jewish Community of Rome, the Pope, after beginning with words of welcome and appreciation for the hospitality which he was shown, [46:00] made reference to two stories. One has to do with Pope John XXIII, and he said in his affirmations, in that experience, that he wanted to use this occasion of meeting with the Jewish community of Italy, to affirm, to take on as his own, the heritage of Pope John XXIII -

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