



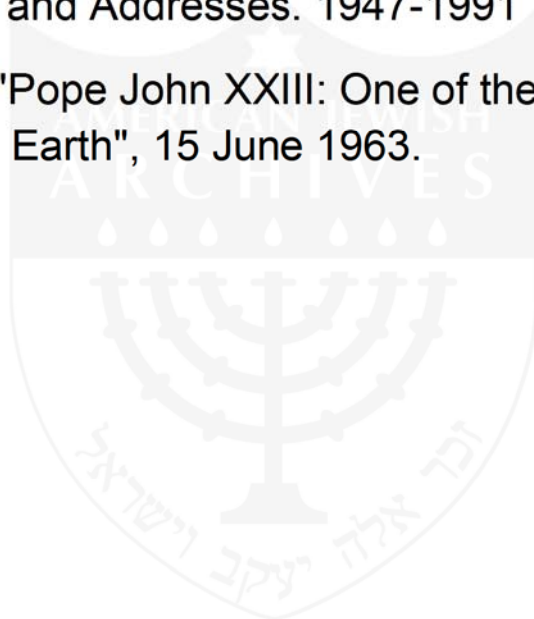
THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
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Box 1, Folder 19, "Pope John XXIII: One of the Righteous Among
the Peoples of the Earth", 15 June 1963.



THE EDITOR'S DESK



POPE John lies dying . . . and throughout the world men are saddened by the imminent loss of a good father.

This has been the dominant theme of John XXIII's pontificate; he has been a good father to all men. He came to the throne of St. Peter with the wisdom and understanding of an old man who had learned much from his years. That wisdom, combined with his humanity and directness, has provided the Church with an unforgettable four years.

It was hard for most of us to take Angelo Roncalli seriously when he was presented to the world as the newest Vicar of Christ. This homely old man, squeezed into a white cassock too small for his girth, seemed incredibly out of place as successor to the brilliant, austere Pius XII. Most observers felt that they would like to have this gentle, humble, holy priest as their pastor, but they had great difficulty in seeing him as the leader of Christendom in an age of crisis.

Pope John's impatience with details of protocol and patterns of solemnity quickly won the affection of an age which had discarded pomp and pageantry for directness and simplicity. Possibly the best example of the change which had come over the papacy was the incident which saw the Supreme Pontiff chatting to a group of delighted prisoners and startled ecclesiastics about a relative of his who had done time for poaching.

He was warm, he was human, he was a father, he was loved. . . . Then this simple son of an Italian farmer proceeded to turn the institutional Church upside down. In what seemed to be an inspired impulse, he announced the convocation of an ecumenical council. Sweeping through all the obstacles of planning and organization, he made it clear that this was not a symbolic gesture toward a council which might take place in a decade or two. He knew that he couldn't expect too many more years, and he intended to have something to say about the effects of Vatican II.

He has indeed.

As the good Father of Christendom goes to submit his accounting to his Saviour, he takes with him the highest of recommendations — the deep love and sincere prayers of all men of good will.

God grant him the peace and joy of an eternity with the Master he served so well!

John Reedy, c.s.c.

AVE MARIA

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POPE JOHN XXIII: "ONE OF THE RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH"

BY RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM

SINCE biblical times, there has been a vital Jewish tradition which holds that the highest tribute the Jewish people can bestow on a non-Jew is to regard him as *echod m'chasidei umot ha'olam*, "one of the righteous among the peoples of the earth." Such "righteous" ones, according to *The Ethics of the Fathers*, are regarded as blessed and are "vouchsafed a portion in the world to come." Their lives of piety and righteousness are seen as crucial in helping "to sustain the world." For such noble spirits, the Talmud enjoined Jews to praise God and to thank Him: "He who sees the sages of the nations of the world says, 'Blessed be He who has given of wisdom to flesh and blood.'"

The religious practice is well known among Jews, dating back to the Pharaic and Rabbinic period, who when they talked of a devout Christian, add, God be with him, God help him, may God prolong his life. When recalling deceased pious Christians, they add the words: Blessed be his memory, may his soul be received in the host of the blessed.

During the anxious weeks of illness preceding his death, the name of Pope John XXIII became synonymous with "hasid," the "righteous one," the "pious one" and on the lips of hosts of Jews were these traditional words of prayer and benediction. On May 28, when the newspapers grimly proclaimed, "Pope Worse," the New York Board of Rabbis — representing Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbis serving the largest Jewish community in the world — made a public appeal to its members to offer prayers to God for the Pope's recovery. Similar appeals were made by major Jewish religious bodies, national Rabbinic and Synagogal, as well as civic and social action groups such as my own, the American Jewish Committee.

These were unprecedented expressions of concern and tribute from Jews in all walks of life, and from throughout the inhabited world, for

a Pontiff of the Catholic Church. Jews have held a number of Popes in especial esteem, beginning with the great Pope Gregory I of the sixth century who inaugurated the far-reaching Papal Bull, *Sicut Judeis*, which guaranteed the Jewish people their right to unhindered worship and protection from forced conversion. But no Pope that I know of throughout the history of the Church has communicated such a clear and consistent attitude of friendship and profound understanding toward the Jewish people and Judaism as had John XXIII. To paraphrase a Presbyterian's comment, "He is the best Pope the Jews ever had!"

While they shared with many non-Catholics the general regard for Pope John's warm human qualities, Jews had additional reasons for their friendly attitudes.

ACTIONS and pronouncements of the Pope had impressed Jews with his serious desire to improve relations between Catholics and Jews. Many were deeply moved by reports that toward the end of World War II, the Pope, then serving as the apostolic delegate in the Middle East, made available baptismal certificates that enabled the rescue of thousands of Jewish men, women, and children from Nazi death camps. He had reacted to the appeal for aid spontaneously, and he had made no conditions.

Shortly after ascending the papal throne, the Pontiff ordered the removal from Catholic liturgy of several references regarded as offensive to the Jews. During this year's Good Friday worship services, when the celebrant of the Mass repeated the phrase "perfidious Jews" either out of habit or as a result of using a missal that had not been brought up to date, the Pope, according to newspaper reports, halted the *Triduum* rite and caused the passage to be repeated with the offensive phrase left out.

His reaffirmations of Christian-

ity's rootedness in Judaism had also strengthened Jewry's positive feelings. The Pontiff's confirmations of this historic bond were repeated on a number of occasions, and perhaps nowhere more clearly than in his seventh encyclical, *Paenitentiam Agere* (To Do Penance) in which he appealed to Catholics throughout the world to fast and offer penance for the Second Vatican Council. He pointed out that the practices of fasting and penance are based on Jewish traditions, the teachings of the Old Testament, of Moses and the Prophets.

LITTLE wonder then that shortly after his election to the papacy in October 1958, the Chief Rabbi of Venice, Dr. Leone Leoni, flew to Rome to deliver a special greeting on behalf of the Jewish community in the city where the new Pontiff had spent five years as Patriarch. Or that in 1960, 102 Jewish leaders returning from a refugee mission in North Africa and Israel, made a special stopover in Rome for an audience with Pope John who received them with the now celebrated embrace, "I am Joseph, your brother!"

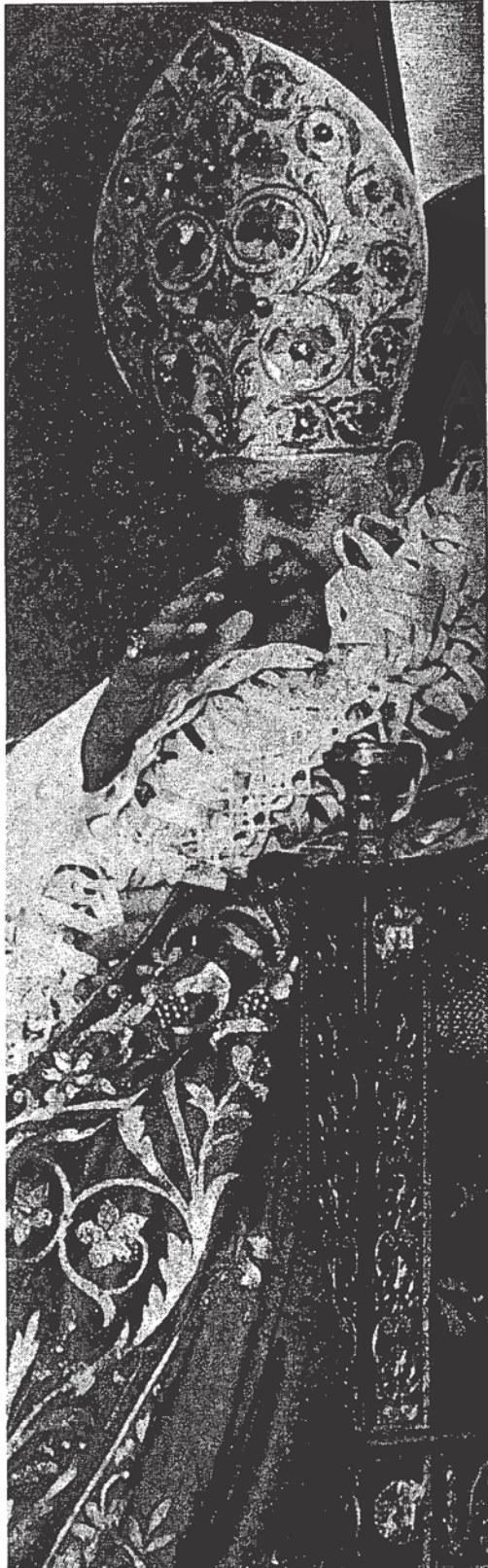
These sympathetic attitudes of Jews toward the Pope had been extended toward the Ecumenical Council which he had summoned. Jews generally recognized that the Council was a Christian meeting convoked to consider doctrinal and organizational problems confronting

Rabbi Tanenbaum is director of the Interreligious Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee. He is the Jewish consultant to the Pius XII Religious Education Resources Center. Regarded as an authority on Christian-Jewish relations, he helped arrange the agape for Cardinal Bea on April 1 in New York. Rabbi Tanenbaum, who has worked closely with Cardinal Bea's secretariat to advance Catholic-Jewish understanding, has written for Catholic publications and has lectured before numerous Catholic universities. He helped organize and served as program chairman for the National Conference on Religion and Race.

"Of such basic and radical importance are the declarations of "Pacem in Terris" that I would presume to say that the Catholic Church will never be the same again. Nor will non-Catholics who have allowed themselves to be open to the extraordinary spiritual presence of this holy man."

Pope John condemned anti-Semitism.

WIDE WORLD PHOTO



the Church and also to explore questions of unity with the "separated brethren" of Protestantism and Eastern Orthodoxy. To the extent that the Council dealt with questions of theology and doctrine, of significance to the Catholic faithful and to other Christians, it was evident that Jews were not involved. This feeling for propriety explains why responsible Jewish groups, religious and lay, did not seek invitations to send observer delegates to the Council.

At the same time, Jews felt involved in the Council in fundamental ways. First, in exploring ecumenical relations with Protestants, it was theologically inevitable that consideration be given to the heritage of the Hebrew Bible which all branches of Christianity share in common. And significantly, Pope John's Council during its first session led to increased consultation and dialogue between Catholic and Jewish scholars on the continent and in America, recalling the fruitful exchanges between St. Jerome and Jewish Bible authorities in Palestine where the Church Father spent 40 years translating the Vulgate based on *midrashic* traditions.

Second, Jews had hoped that the Council's examinations of the relations between Catholics and other groups in a growing pluralist world would lead to a forthright clarification of the Church's position on religious liberty, the separation of church and state, and religious pluralism. Authoritative declarations on these issues would help Jews, as well as Protestants and Orthodox, to overcome lingering mistrust and suspicion.

Third, foremost among the steps which Jews had wished the Council to take to advance the specific end of Catholic-Jewish relationships was that of a re-examination of the sources of anti-Semitism which grew out of the polemical period of early Church and Synagogue history, "the themes of contempt and the system of degradation." Many Jews believed that the Council could literally start

a new cycle in Christian-Jewish relationships by condemning vigorously all manifestations of anti-Semitism, as did the World Council of Churches in New Delhi in November 1961.

DESPITE the catechism of the Council of Trent which affirms the doctrine that Jesus died for all humanity and that all humanity shares the responsibility for his death, the concept of collective Jewish responsibility persists and finds expression and reinforcement in certain prayers, passages of the liturgy and in a great many Catholic textbooks. As already indicated, Pope John had demonstrated his personal aversion to the perpetuation of these distorted teachings about the Jews, and many had thought the Council might confront seriously the problem of anti-Semitism in this spirit and set into motion an effective program to combat this complex evil.

Catholic friends tell me that there is now some question as to whether the second session of the Ecumenical Council will be convened. While high hopes of as many non-Catholics as of Catholics have been pinned on the September 8th session, should it not come off, there is real comfort to be found in the tremendous and historic legacy that Pope John bequeathed to his Church and to "all men of good will," namely *Pacem in Terris*.

The chorus of enthusiastic praise from Jewish leaders, which formed but part of a vast symphonic endorsement of the encyclical on the part of Protestant, Orthodox, Oriental leaders, even Communists, were climactic testimonies as much to the universal esteem and trust that were lodged in the person of Pope John as in the fundamental propositions that he had set forth to promote "the universal common good."

For many Jews, as undoubtedly for other non-Catholics, a number of those basic questions which they had looked for resolution by the

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THE PEASANT POPE

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Among his most delicate assignments was the role he played in the royal marriage of King Boris, an Orthodox, to the Italian Catholic Princess Giovanna of the House of Savoy. The King and his Foreign Minister visited the Pope and, through Archbishop Roncalli's mediation, the King agreed to marry the Princess in the Catholic Church, to bring up any children in the Catholic Faith and not to go through an Orthodox ceremony after the marriage. He was married in Assisi. When he returned to Bulgaria, however, he ignored his promises and went through a second ceremony in the Orthodox cathedral and had his son baptized in the Orthodox Church.

On November 21, 1934, Archbishop Roncalli was transferred to the post of apostolic delegate for Greece and Turkey. Despite his setbacks and the fact that he represented the Pope in a land of the Orthodox Church, the Archbishop was given a beautiful farewell when he left Bulgaria. Among the people at the train station to say good-bye were a personal representative of the King, the Prime Minister, the entire diplomatic corps and the Orthodox Archimandrite Josif, the highest official of the Orthodox Metropolitan of Sofia.

Archbishop Roncalli was apostolic delegate to Turkey and Greece from 1935 to 1944. The first years were very similar to those in Bulgaria.

The friendly prelate worked to ease tensions in the predominantly non-Catholic countries. But it was a decade of wars and slowly the shadow of fighting, suffering and hunger lengthened over the face of Europe.

As Pope Pius XII vainly urged Benito Mussolini to remain at peace, Archbishop Roncalli was busy informing the Greek Government of the Pope's efforts. He shuttled between Athens and Istanbul, keeping the lines of communication open as long as possible. After Greece's invasion he continued traveling between the two capitals, the peaceful envoy of the Pope of Peace in a world of war.

By 1941 Greece, overrun by the German armies, was desperately short of food. Documents discovered in the library of the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Athens after the war told of the remarkable role played by the future Pope in relieving the starvation of Greece.

Archbishop Roncalli acted as the go-between for the Greek Government and the Allies. Using the Vatican's facilities, the apostolic delegate delivered Greece's appeal to the Allies to send 350,000 tons of wheat to stricken Greece. The wheat was paid for in large part by the Vatican, by Catholics in the United States and Greeks living overseas.

When he found time, the Archbishop liked to visit Orthodox monasteries and pray before the ancient icons and at the altars. He haunted bookshops and secondhand stores picking up souvenirs of his assignment and mementos of his long years working among separated Christians.

HIS next assignment was a major step on the long road that led Angelo Roncalli from his farming village to the Vatican. In December, 1944, he was notified by the Secretariat of State that he was to be the new apostolic nuncio to Paris. He was justly surprised by the appointment since Paris probably carried more prestige than any other post in the Vatican's diplomacy.

But the Pope was not particularly interested in honoring Archbishop Roncalli. He was selected for Paris because a ticklish situation existed there, a situation needing pleasant and outgoing warmth, the adroit ability to remain in an almost hostile atmosphere without losing one's head. These the Archbishop had.

At the age of 63, Archbishop Roncalli reported for duty in Paris on December 31, 1944. He succeeded



WIDE WORLD PHOTO

Archbishop Valerio Valeri, who had been accredited to the despised Vichy French Government during German domination of the country.

Many of the Free French and of the underground — good Catholics among them — resented the Vatican's recognition of the Vichy Government, and Archbishop Roncalli's welcome was formal and cold. Shortly after his arrival he was presented with a government request for the removal of more than 30 French Bishops from their posts on ground they had collaborated with the Germans or been compliant to the wishes of the puppet French regime.

Tactfully the nuncio received the request and then politely countered by asking for adequate investigation and documentation of the charges. If the charges proved true, then the Vatican would act, he assured the government. It took more than a year to get through all the cases. But at the end, only three Bishops were asked to resign.

An aide of that time, Msgr. Giacomo Testa, who was the nuncio's secretary, summed up well the Archbishop's career and success in France.

"He arrived in Paris," Msgr. Testa wrote, "at a critical moment, and he immediately had to face a delicate situation. All sorts of passions and hatreds were unleashed in France, a wind that concealed the germs of revolution blew over the country.

"Roncalli's smiling goodness, his

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calm, his patience, his firmness, his ability to overcome difficulties and obstacles saved the Church and France from real catastrophes."

He visited 85 of France's 87 dioceses and even journeyed to Algeria, then an integral part of France. Yet while he worked diligently to assist the Church in France and to allay hostility he did not fail to urge repatriation of 250,000 German prisoners who were still interned two years after Germany's defeat. The French Bishops backed him in the appeal for repatriation and France complied.

Among the most difficult tasks during his years in France was the problem of the worker-priests. This movement, springing from a sincere desire to bring the Church to the industrial workers who abandoned Catholicism, proved a grave postwar problem. It took priests into the factory as employees and let them live in the working-class housing districts, outside of their rectories or monasteries.

Conservative factions of the Vatican regarded the movement with suspicion, and it was not long before grave problems arose. Worker-priests became involved in union organizations, often dominated by the Communists. The spiritual life of the priest in the working world became threatened. In 1947 the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office interested itself in the spiritual welfare of the worker-priests.

Archbishop Roncalli's role in the matter was two-sided. It was his specific duty to keep the Holy See informed of the movement but also to represent to the Holy See the ardent desires that many French Bishops had for the movement. As a go-between the nuncio suggested the three ranking members of the French hierarchy, Cardinals Feltin, Gerlier and Lienart, be invited to Rome to discuss the matter directly with Pope Pius XII. On their return the movement was modified: Worker-priests were allowed to work in factories only three hours a day and had to live in some form of religious community. Later, after he became Pope, the movement was completely disbanded with the suggestion that such activity belonged more properly to the laity.

IN December, 1952, Pope Pius XII notified the nuncio to Paris that he intended to create him a Cardinal. The honor was great, but it was not without its drawbacks for the then 71-year-old prelate. As he told cardinal Feltin: "It is painful to think

that I should end my life among Roman paperwork, in the offices or congregations."

But that was not to be. One of the other prelates nominated along with the nuncio in 1952 was Archbishop Carlo Agostini, Patriarch of Venice. The Patriarch died the following month and in his place was chosen Angelo Cardinal Roncalli.

The choice was a happy one. As the new Patriarch was borne along the Grand Canal of Venice in March, 1953, he was returning home almost 30 years to the day from the time when he'd been sent to Bulgaria.

The unique and beautiful city which is Venice was suited to Cardinal Roncalli. Both the city and the Cardinal could look back on a mixture of memories of the East and West.

Although he had held assignments of greater prestige and difficulty, Cardinal Roncalli did not rest on his laurels. The Cardinal by no means considered taking a long-deserved rest and passing his days quietly in the warm sun along the Venetian canal. He busied himself with restoring the great and world-famous golden Basilica of St. Mark's. He also renovated the ancient Patriarchal palace adjoining the Basilica, giving special attention to the rooms of St. Pius X, who was also once Patriarch of Venice.

In the span of five years he built 30 churches and a minor seminary. He had all the bodies of his predecessors transported from the cemetery island of San Michele and laid to rest in the restored crypt of St. Mark's. One recess was left vacant. It was reserved for Angelo Roncalli.

The five years in Venice were busy. Cardinal Roncalli made it his business to know his city and his people. He took part in all the traditional feasts. He invited artists, journalists, movie makers and musicians to special Masses in St. Mark's. And he could be found walking along the banks of the canals, dressed as a simple priest.

When the sad news of the death of Pope Pius XII reached him on October 9, 1958, Angelo Cardinal Roncalli celebrated Requiem Mass for the late Pontiff and then packed his bag for the trip to Rome. In it he placed the two great capes which Cardinals wear, one of violet color to be worn during the period of mourning, the other of orangish red to be worn when giving homage to the Cardinal who would be elected the successor of Pope Pius XII.

As he boarded the 9:30 a.m. train at Venice on October 12, 1958, he was accompanied by many priests



WIDE WORLD PHOTO

and friends, most of whom could not help thinking about another Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Giuseppe Sarto, who left Venice almost 50 years earlier to participate in the conclave which elected him Pope Pius X.

The stationmaster, Vittorio de Rosa, put into words what many felt on saying good-bye to Angelo Roncalli, "It is my good wish for you, Your Eminence, that you will not return."

The Cardinal looked at the stationmaster and did not reply immediately.

Before him flowed the Grand Canal with its comforting traffic of gondolas, barges and motorboats, the busy, unconcerned and noisy life of the city which had become his home. Behind the mountains, unseen but never forgotten, was his beloved Bergamo and the pleasant summer vacations at Sotto Il Monte. And far to the south was Rome and the Vatican, the endless round of duties and ceremonies, the immeasurably high wall that surrounds and cuts off the person of the Roman Pontiff and the isolated and overwhelming responsibility that rests on the shoulders of the man called by Providence and his fellow Cardinals to be Vicar of Christ on earth.

Coming out of his reverie, Cardinal Roncalli looked directly at the stationmaster and said:

"My hope is to return to Venice within 15 days." ●

POPE JOHN XXIII: "ONE OF THE RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH"

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25)

second session of the Vatican Council were answered by Pope John in *Pacem in Terris*. In moving accents of Christian humanism, Pope John established the commitment of the Church to uphold and to foster "the natural rights" of every human being, and what is of decisive importance, in those areas of human freedom and conscience in which the Church had heretofore appeared to non-Catholics to be ambiguous, if not a threat to a pluralistic, democratic society.

"By the Natural Law," Pope John declared with penetrating clarity and moral earnestness, "every human being has the right to respect for his person, to his good reputation; the right to freedom in searching for truth and in expressing and communicating his opinions . . . he has the right to be informed truthfully about public events. . . . Every human being has the right to honor God according to the dictates of an upright conscience, and therefore the right to worship God privately and publicly. . . . From the fact that human beings are by nature social, there arises the right of assembly and association. . . . Every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of his own country; and when there are just reasons for it, the right to emigrate to other countries and take up residence there . . . racial discrimination can in no way be justified . . . injustice is even more serious if . . . sinful projects are aimed at the very extinction of these (minority) groups. . . . The doctrinal principles outlined in this Document . . . provide Catholics with a vast field in which they can meet and come to an understanding both with Christians . . . and also with human beings . . . who are endowed with the light of reason and with a natural and operative honesty. . . ."

OF such basic and radical importance are these declarations—which are the fruit of the five years of Pope John's papacy although prefigured by his predecessors—that I would presume to say that the

Church will never be the same again. Nor will non-Catholics who have allowed themselves to be open to the extraordinary spiritual presence of this holy man. Perhaps his greatest gift to all of us has been his compelling us to confront the new realities of the world in which we live—a world in which we white Jews and Christians are already a minority; in which by the year 2,000 Catholics will be nine to 10% of the global population as contrasted with 18% today; in which the rising nations of Africa and Asia and the resurgent Oriental religions will force us to abandon our Western monopolies and hegemonies and accommodate ourselves to a genuine global pluralism, which is another way of speaking of the interdependent human family. *Pacem in Terris* is Pope John's gift that is both a curriculum and a Baedeker preparing us paternally for that world that is already upon us.

But the greatest service that Pope John has performed for all of us has been to thrust before the consciousness of the world the realization that it teeters on the brink of thermonuclear destruction, and that the only alternative to this apocalyptic horror—in which East and West can today "overkill" each other at least 125 times!—is the biblical alternative of Deuteronomy, to choose life, to love peace and to pursue it.

Among the earliest responses to *Pacem in Terris* were those of three Orthodox Chief Rabbis: Dr. Izhak Nissim, the Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel; Dr. Jacob Kaplan, Chief Rabbi of France; and Dr. Elio Toaff, Chief Rabbi of Rome, as well as those of Jewish religious and lay leaders in America and in other parts of the world. Dr. Nissim expressed the sense of all the Jewish responses in his statement, "Every man of faith and conscience who believes in divine justice and in freedom must endeavor to bring about the realization of the Pope's sublime words."

The fact that the Chief Rabbis publicly associated themselves with the appeal of Pope John is in itself an act of unprecedented and historic

significance; I know of nothing similar to this occurrence in 1,900 years of relationships between Christians and Jews. Thus, I take this to be both a tribute to the spiritual greatness of the late Pontiff as well as a response to the frightful challenges of the nuclear-missile age which he sought so vigorously to bring before the human family.

In the middle of the 11th century, the Catholic Church sought to enforce a "Truce of God" which greatly restricted the time when it was permissible to carry on warfare. Through his brilliant and compassionate encyclicals and the Ecumenical Council, Pope John labored to help achieve a 20th-century "Truce of God" before the world destroys itself in a thermonuclear holocaust—and, almost tragically, either through mechanical error or human miscalculation.

PERHAPS the most significant memorial that we could erect to Pope John, and the most relevant instruction that we could take from his ministry on this earth, would be to undertake at once those steps which would help advance the goals of his latest encyclical which all of us share. To this end, I would propose that appropriate leaders of the three faith communities who share a consensus on world community and world peace take the initiative as early as possible to convene on the American scene a "National Conference on Religion and World Peace."

The recent conference on "Religion and Race" with which I was privileged to be associated as program chairman, is testimony to the great impact that such a combined religious witness can make. Based on the success of such an enterprise, one could then visualize the possibility of a world-wide meeting of a similar character. When leaders of the world's major faith communities will come together at one table to pursue justice, charity, liberty, and peace in freedom, we may well be witness to the beginning of the translation into reality of the prophetic vision of messianic peace for all mankind, *Pacem in Terris*. ●