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# Catholic MIND

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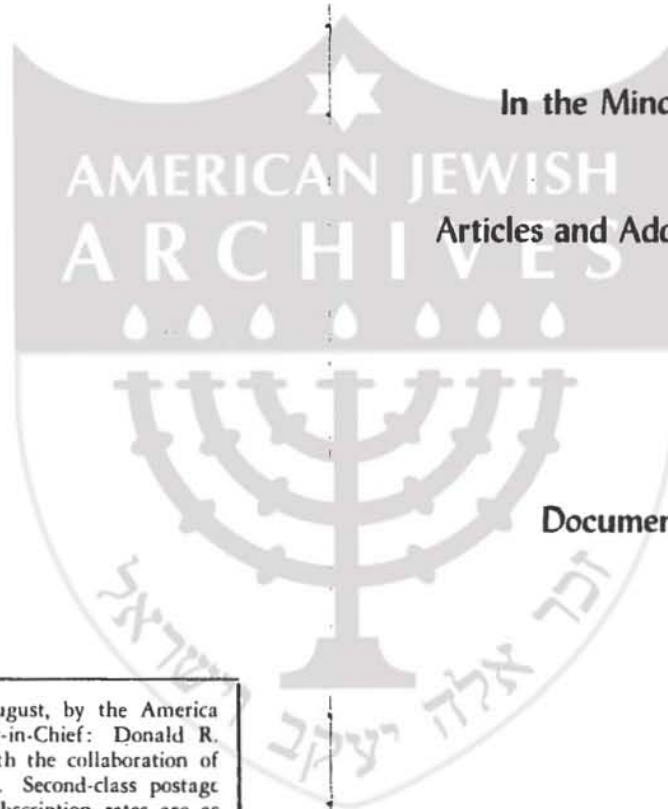
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Guidelines and Suggestions for  
Implementing the Conciliar  
Declaration *Nostra Aetate*  
Vatican Commission on  
Relations with Judaism

The following document, as its opening paragraphs make clear, deals with ways of implementing the Second Vatican Council's call for more fruitful dialogue and relationships between Catholics and Jews. These guidelines were prepared by the Vatican Commission that is headed by Cardinal Jan Willebrands and they are dated December 1, 1974. They were made public on January 3, 1975.

The declaration *Nostra Aetate*, issued by the Second Vatican Council on October 28, 1965, "on the relationship of the church to non-Christian religions" (n. 4), marks an important milestone in the history of Jewish-Christian relations.

Moreover, the step taken by the council finds its historical setting in circumstances deeply affected by the memory of the persecution and massacre of Jews which took place in Europe just before and during the Second World War.

Although Christianity sprang from Judaism, taking from it certain essential elements of its faith and divine cult, the gap dividing them was deepened more

and more, to such an extent that Christian and Jew hardly knew each other.

After two thousand years, too often marked by mutual ignorance and frequent confrontation, the declaration *Nostra Aetate* provides an opportunity to open or to continue a dialogue with a view to better mutual understanding. Over the past nine years, many steps in this direction have been taken in various countries. As a result, it is easier to distinguish the conditions under which a new relationship between Jews and Christians may be worked out and developed.

This seems the right moment to propose, following the guidelines of the council, some concrete suggestions born of experience, hoping that they will help to bring into actual existence in the life of the church the intentions expressed in the conciliar document.

While referring the reader back to this document, we may simply restate here that the spiritual bonds and historical links binding the church to Judaism condemn (as opposed to the very spirit of Christianity) all forms of anti-Semitism and discrimination, which in any case the dignity of the human person alone would suffice to condemn. Further still, these links and relationships render obligatory a better mutual understanding and renewed mutual esteem. On the practical level in particular, Christians must therefore strive to acquire a better knowledge of the basic components of the religious tradition of Judaism; they must strive to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience.

With due respect for such matters of principle, we simply propose some first

practical applications in different essential areas of the church's life, with a view to launching or developing sound relations between Catholics and their Jewish brothers.

#### I. DIALOGUE

To tell the truth, such relations as there have been between Jew and Christian have scarcely ever risen above the level of monologue. From now on, real dialogue must be established.

Dialogue presupposes that each side wishes to know the other, and wishes to increase and deepen its knowledge of the other. It constitutes a particularly suitable means of favoring a better mutual knowledge and, especially in the case of dialogue between Jews and Christians, of probing the riches of one's own tradition. Dialogue demands respect for the other as he is; above all, respect for his faith and his religious convictions.

In virtue of her divine mission, and her very nature, the church must preach Jesus Christ to the world (*Ad Gentes*, 2). Lest the witness of Catholics to Jesus Christ should give offense to Jews, they must take care to live and spread their Christian faith, while maintaining the strictest respect for religious liberty in line with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council (Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*). They will likewise strive to understand the difficulties which arise for the Jewish soul—rightly imbued with an extremely high, pure notion of the divine transcendence—when faced with the mystery of the Incarnate Word.

While it is true that a widespread air of suspicion, inspired by an unfortunate past, is still dominant in this particular



area, Christians, for their part, will be able to see to what extent the responsibility is theirs and deduce practical conclusions for the future.

In addition to friendly talks, competent people will be encouraged to meet and to study together the many problems deriving from the fundamental convictions of Judaism and of Christianity. In order not to hurt (even involuntarily) those taking part, it will be vital to guarantee, not only tact, but a great openness of spirit and diffidence with respect to one's own prejudices.

In whatever circumstances as shall prove possible and mutually acceptable, one might encourage a common meeting in the presence of God, in prayer and silent meditation, a highly efficacious way of finding that humility, that openness of heart and mind, necessary prerequisites for a deep knowledge of oneself and of others. In particular, that will be done in connection with great causes such as the struggle for peace and justice.

## II. LITURGY

The existing links between the Christian liturgy and the Jewish liturgy will be borne in mind. The idea of a living community in the service of God, and in the service of men for the love of God, such as it is realized in the liturgy, is just as characteristic of the Jewish liturgy as it is of the Christian one. To improve Jewish-Christian relations, it is important to take cognizance of those common elements of the liturgical life (formulas, feasts, rites, etc.) in which the Bible holds an essential place.

An effort will be made to acquire a better understanding of whatever in the

Old Testament retains its own perpetual value (cf. *Dei Verbum*, 14-15), since that has not been cancelled by the later interpretation of the New Testament. Rather, the New Testament, brings out the full meaning of the Old, while both Old and New illumine and explain each other (cf. *ibid.*, 16). This is all the more important since liturgical reform is now bringing the text of the Old Testament ever more frequently to the attention of Christians.

When commenting on biblical texts, emphasis will be laid on the continuity of our faith with that of the earlier covenant, in the perspective of the promises, without minimizing those elements of Christianity which are original. We believe that those promises were fulfilled with the first coming of Christ. But it is none the less true that we still await their perfect fulfillment in His glorious return at the end of time.

With respect to liturgical readings, care will be taken to see that homilies based on them will not distort their meaning, especially when it is a question of passages which seem to show the Jewish people as such in an unfavorable light. Efforts will be made so to instruct the Christian people that they will understand the true interpretation of all the texts and their meaning for the contemporary believer.

Commissions entrusted with the task of liturgical translation will pay particular attention to the way in which they express those phrases and passages which Christians, if not well informed, might misunderstand because of prejudice. Obviously, one cannot alter the text of the Bible. The point is that, with a version

destined for liturgical use, there should be an overriding preoccupation to bring out explicitly the meaning of a text, while taking scriptural studies into account.<sup>1</sup>

The preceding remarks apply to introductions to biblical readings, to the prayer of the faithful, and to commentaries printed in missals used by the laity.



## III. TEACHING AND EDUCATION

Although there is still a great deal of work to be done, a better understanding of Judaism itself and its relationship to Christianity has been achieved in recent years thanks to the teaching of the church, the study and research of scholars, as also to the beginning of dialogue. In this respect, the following facts deserve to be recalled.

—It is the same God, "inspirer and author of the books of both Testaments," (*Dei Verbum*, 16), who speaks both in the old and new covenants.

—Judaism in the time of Christ and the Apostles was a complex reality embracing many different trends, many spiritual, religious, social and cultural values.

—The Old Testament and the Jewish tradition founded upon it must not be set against the New Testament in such a way that the former seems to constitute a religion of only justice, fear and legalism, with no appeal to the love of God and neighbor (cf. Deut. 6:5, Lev. 19:18, Matt. 22:34-40).

—Jesus was born of the Jewish peo-

ple, as were his apostles and a large number of his first disciples. When he revealed himself as the Messiah and Son of God (cf. Matt. 16:16), the bearer of the new gospel message, he did so as the fulfillment and perfection of the earlier Revelation. And, although his teaching had a profoundly new character, Christ, nevertheless, in many instances, took his stand on the teaching of the Old Testament. The New Testament is profoundly marked by its relation to the Old. As the Second Vatican Council declared: "God, the inspirer and author of the books of both Testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and the Old be made manifest in the New" (*Dei Verbum*, 16), Jesus also used teaching methods similar to those employed by the rabbis of his time.

—With regard to the trial and death of Jesus, the council recalled that "what happened in His passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today" (*Nostra Aetate*, 4).

—The history of Judaism did not end with the destruction of Jerusalem, but rather went on to develop a religious tradition. And, although we believe that the importance and meaning of that tradition were deeply affected by the coming of Christ, it is still nonetheless rich in religious values.

—With the prophets and the apostle Paul, "the church awaits the day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and 'serve him with one accord' (Soph. 3:9)" (*Nostra Aetate*, 4).

Information concerning these questions



is important at all levels of Christian instruction and education. Among sources of information, special attention should be paid to the following:

- catechisms and religious textbooks;
- history books;
- the mass-media (press, radio, cinema, television).

The effective use of these means presupposes the thorough formation of instructors and educators in training schools, seminaries and universities.

Research into the problems bearing on Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations will be encouraged among specialists, particularly in the fields of exegesis, theology, history and sociology. Higher institutions of Catholic research, in association if possible with other similar Christian institutions and experts, are invited to contribute to the solution of such problems. Wherever possible, chairs of Jewish studies will be created, and collaboration with Jewish scholars encouraged.



#### IV. JOINT SOCIAL ACTION

Jewish and Christian tradition, founded on the Word of God, is aware of the value of the human person, the image of God. Love of the same God must show itself in effective action for the good of mankind. In the spirit of the prophets, Jews and Christians will work willingly together, seeking social justice and peace at every level—local, national and international.

At the same time, such collaboration

can do much to foster mutual understanding and esteem.

#### CONCLUSION

The Second Vatican Council has pointed out the path to follow in promoting deep fellowship between Jews and Christians. But there is still a long road ahead.

The problem of Jewish-Christian relations concerns the church as such, since it is when "pondering her own mystery" that she encounters the mystery of Israel. Therefore, even in areas where no Jewish communities exist, this remains an important problem. There is also an ecumenical aspect to the question: the very return of Christians to the sources and origins of their faith, grafted on to the earlier covenant, helps the search for unity in Christ, the cornerstone.

In this field, the bishops will know what best to do on the pastoral level, within the general disciplinary framework of the church and in line with the common teaching of her magisterium. For example, they will create some suitable commissions or secretariats on a national or regional level, or appoint some competent person to promote the implementation of the conciliar directives and suggestions made above.

On October 22, 1974, the Holy Father instituted for the universal church this commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, joined to the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. This special commission, created to encourage and foster religious relations between Jews and Catholics—and to do so eventually in collaboration with other Christians—will be, within the limits of its competence, at the service of all interested

organizations, providing information for them, and helping them to pursue their task in conformity with the instructions of the Holy See.

The commission wishes to develop this collaboration in order to implement, correctly and effectively, the express intentions of the council.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Thus the formula "the Jews," in St. John, sometimes according to the context means "the leaders of the Jews," or "the adversaries of Jesus," terms which express better the thought of the evangelist and avoid appearing to arraign the Jewish people as such. Another example is the use of the words "pharisee" and "pharisaism" which have taken on a largely pejorative meaning.



#### Pope Paul VI's Comments on the Guidelines for Jewish-Catholic Relationships

On January 10, 1975, a week after the publication of the "Guidelines and Suggestions for Jewish-Catholic Relationships," that had been drawn up by the Vatican's Commission on Relations with Judaism, Pope Paul VI made the following address to members of an international Catholic-Jewish Committee that met in Rome, January 7-10.

You, the Catholic and Jewish members of the liaison committee between the Catholic Church and World Judaism, decided a little over a year ago in Anvers, to hold your fourth annual meeting in Rome. We rejoice in this decision of yours to meet this time in the city which is the center of the Catholic Church: it has made possible today's fraternal meeting.

Your session is taking place a short time after we set up, last October, a commission of the Catholic Church for religious relations with the Jews, the first important act of which was the publication a few days ago of the Guidelines and Suggestions for the implementation of the conciliar declaration *Nostra Aetate* in the sphere of Jewish-Catholic relations.

We will not return at this moment to the details of that document, which was addressed to the faithful of the Catholic Church by the central authority of the church and which has doubtless been, together with the question of human rights and still other problems, one of the objects of study and shared reflection to which your session has been devoted.

This text evokes the difficulties and confrontations, with all the regrettable elements involved, which have marked relations between Christians and Jews over the past two thousand years.

While this reminder has been salutary and indispensable, one should not forget that there have also been between us down the centuries elements other than confrontations. There are still many people who can witness to what was done by the Catholic Church during the last war, in Rome itself, under the energetic impulse of Pius XII—as we personally testify—and by numerous bishops, priests and members of the faithful, to save innocent Jews from persecution, often at the peril of their own lives.

Moreover, as we look at history as a whole, we cannot fail to note the connections, often too little remarked upon, between Jewish thought and Christian thought. We may here merely recall the



influence exercised at various periods in the most exalted spheres of Christian reflection by the thought of the great Philo of Alexandria, who was considered by Saint Jerome as "the most expert among the Jews," a judgment echoed by, among others, the Franciscan Doctor, Bonaventure of Bagnaregio.

But, precisely, since the Catholic Church has just commemorated, at the same time as the seventh centenary of the death of Saint Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, that of the philosopher and theologian, Thomas Aquinas, who died, like Bonaventure, in the year 1274, there very naturally come to our mind the numerous references of our angelic doctor to the work of the rabbinic scholar from Cordoba, who died in Egypt at the dawn of the thirteenth century, Moshe ben Maimon, in particular his explanations of the Mosaic Law and the precepts of Judaism.

For his part, the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas was to expand in its turn in the scholarly tradition of medieval Judaism. As has been shown for example by the studies of Professor Charles Touati of the School of Higher Studies in Paris, and by Professor Joseph Sermoneta of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, there existed in the Latin West at the end of the thirteenth and in the fourteenth century, a whole Jewish Thomistic school.

These are merely some examples drawn from many others. They bear witness to the fact that at different periods and at a certain level there has been real and profound mutual esteem and a conviction that we had something to learn from one another.

We formulate, gentlemen, the sincere wish that, in a manner appropriate to our age and thus in a field that to some extent exceeds the limited domain of merely speculative and rational exchanges, a true dialogue may be established between Judaism and Christianity.

Your presence here as some of the most authoritative representatives of world Judaism bears witness to the fact that this personal wish finds a certain echo in yourselves. The terms with which we express it, the presence of the devoted cardinal president of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, that of our brothers in the episcopate, the Archbishop of Marseilles and the Bishop of Brooklyn, are clear indications to you of the sincerity and collegial decision with which the Catholic Church desires that there should develop at this time that dialogue with Judaism to which the Second Vatican Council invited us by its Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (cf. no. 4).

We hope that this dialogue, conducted with great mutual respect, will help us to know one another better and will lead us all to know better the Almighty, the eternal One, to follow more faithfully the ways that have been traced out for us by Him who, in the words of the prophet Hosea (11:9), is in our midst as the Holy One, who takes no pleasure in destroying.

We dare to think that the recent solemn reaffirmation of rejection by the Catholic Church of every form of anti-Semitism and the invitation that we have extended to all the faithful of the Catholic Church to pay heed in order "to

learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience" may, on the Catholic side, provide the conditions for beneficial development. We do not doubt that you on your part will correspond, according to your perspectives, to our effort, which can only have meaning and fruitfulness in reciprocity.

In the perspective of understanding and friendship which we evoked before the Sacred College last December 23, we formulate for you here present, gentlemen, and for your families, but more widely still for the entire Jewish people our best wishes of happiness and peace.



#### An American Jewish Spokesman Comments on the Vatican's Guidelines for Jewish-Catholic Relationships

Under date of December 26, 1974, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, national director for interreligious affairs of the American Jewish Committee, sent the following memorandum to the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), of which he is co-secretary. Rabbi Tanenbaum's statement is a comment on the "Guidelines and Suggestions for Jewish-Catholic Relationships" that were drawn up by the Vatican's Commission on relations with Judaism.

Following is my critique of the proposed Vatican "Guidelines" which I propose as a basis for discussion with members of

the Vatican Office for Catholic-Jewish Relations when we meet in Rome from January 7 through 9.

The guidelines for implementing the Vatican Council declaration dealing with Catholic-Jewish relations have been promulgated as an internal document for the guidance of the Catholic community, and, as such, it would normally be inappropriate for us to comment on an interior Catholic matter—especially since its contents have not been formally shared with IJCIC prior to their publication.

On other levels, however, it is not only appropriate but obligatory that we clarify our views regarding critical aspects of this document: first, the guidelines make a number of explicit references which constitute value judgments regarding the validity and legitimacy of Judaism and the Jewish people. Insofar as we have accepted the responsibility of representing the interests of large segments of world Jewry, we are morally obligated to assure that the dignity and honor of the Synagogue and the Jewish people are defended and upheld.

Second, Cardinal Willebrands in his introductory note to the guidelines characterizes this document as "the charter of the (Vatican) Commission for relations with Judaism." The contents of the guidelines are therefore of crucial significance for the future of Catholic-Jewish relations in our lifetime, since it provides authoritative orientation for the Catholic people throughout the world in both their official institutional and interpersonal daily relationships with Jewish agencies and Jewish persons as neighbors and fellow-citizens.

Viewed in their entirety, the guidelines



represent from an informed Jewish perspective a significant clarification of a number of vital issues central to Catholic-Jewish relations which we welcome as a constructive and timely contribution to the advancement of Jewish-Christian understanding and cooperation.

At the same time, it contains regrettably certain formulations that no self-respecting Jewish person can live with in good conscience, since these formulations imply a religious "second class" status in the family of faith communities.

The positive features of the guidelines which we welcome include the following:

a) A reiteration of the explicit condemnation by the Roman Catholic Church of anti-Semitism and discrimination which was first contained in the Vatican Council's *Declaration on Non-Christian Religions*. The re-commitment to the cause of combatting anti-Semitism assumes heightened importance today in light of current international conditions in which this ancient hatred is being exploited systematically by the enemies of the Jewish people, and therefore this action is most timely.

b) The appeal to Catholics to recognize that "dialogue demands respect for the other as he is, above all, respect for his faith and his religious convictions." In respect of Judaism and the Jewish people that implies, as the guidelines state, that Catholics seek "to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience." A declaration, if taken seriously, would logically and morally necessitate a coming to terms with the fact that the Jewish people's self-definition centers on the critical conviction that

God's covenant with Israel is ever lasting and is not subject to termination or substitution by the claims of another faith community.

As the Bible declares in Dt. 7:6-9: "For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be his own treasure, out of all peoples that are upon the face of the earth.

"The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people—for you were the fewest of all peoples—but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he swore unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the land of Pharaoh King of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love and keep his commandments to a thousand generations."

The free election by God of his people explicitly involves not only the Sinaitic Covenant, but the covenant with our father Abraham by which the Holy Land was promised to him and to his seed, the people of Israel, until eternity. Any definition of contemporary Jewish religious experience that does not provide for due comprehension and acceptance of the inextricable bonds of God, People, Torah, and Promised Land risks distortion of the essential nature of Judaism and the Jewish people, and would constitute a regression in Jewish-Christian understanding.

c) The charge to implement new understandings in scholarship through the

various methods of "teaching and education" is a valuable and needed reinforcement in these vital areas. The abandonment of the false and polemical teachings regarding the alleged collective guilt of the Jewish people for the death of Jesus, of the stereotypes of the Pharisees as the corporate enemies of Jesus, and the so called spiritual decline of Judaism after the first century—all these historic falsehoods which have constituted an incitement to anti-Semitism—must continue to be uprooted as the weeds of prejudice and discrimination.

The systematic incorporation of these new insights of contemporary scholarship which have come to a fresh discovery of Judaism as a living reality into all areas of Catholic education, liturgy, and mass media would constitute nothing less than a revolution in esteem between Catholics and Jews everywhere.

d) The call to joint social action is particularly welcomed at this time when such pressing national and international problems involving so much human suffering require maximum cooperation.

#### *Negative Features*

As to the negative features of the guidelines we wish to make clear the following: While acknowledging the right of Christians to evangelize, the assertion of a conversionary intention within the framework of guidelines for the improvement of Catholic-Jewish relations cannot but cast doubt about the motivations of the entire program.

Presupposed in a conversionary approach to the Jewish people is a clear assumption that Judaism is inadequate as the source of truth and value to the Jew-

ish people, and that the election of Israel as a covenanted people has somehow been terminated. Such an assertion, either implied or explicit, contradicts in fundamental ways other positive statements in the guidelines that appear to recognize the integrity of Judaism in its own terms.

To welcome these guidelines without making clear that these negations or unresolved ambiguities toward Judaism and the Jewish people are totally unacceptable to the Jewish conscience would be nothing less than a betrayal of God's revelation to Israel and to truth itself. Beyond that, such anachronistic claims, if uncontested, would undermine the authority and credibility of all those great Christian scholars in all denominations, and in a variety of scholarly disciplines, who have been formulating a systematic new theology of Israel that is congruent with the actual religious realities of Judaism and the Jewish people. This theological development, the most hopeful sign of Jewish-Christian relations in 1900 years, provides the only basis for genuine mutual acceptance and mutual trust between Christians and Jews. We feel strongly that the guidelines must seek, to encourage this development and not contribute to its weakening or dissolution.

#### **Comments by Jewish Spokesmen on the Guidelines for Jewish-Catholic Relationships**

When, on January 3, 1975, the Vatican Commission on Relations with Judaism re-



leased its "Guidelines and Suggestions for Jewish-Catholic Relationships," the International Jewish Committee for Inter-religious Consultations simultaneously released the following comments on the text of this document.

We welcome the publication of the "guidelines" for the application of the decision of the Second Vatican Council in the area of Catholic-Jewish relations.

We believe these guidelines, viewed in their entirety, as well as the recently announced establishment of a Commission on Relations with Judaism, will serve to encourage better understanding and improved relations between Catholics and Jews.

The urgent condemnation of anti-Semitism and discrimination could not be more timely, coming at a time when this ancient hatred is once again being exploited by the enemies of the Jewish people.

We wish to note that in certain countries Catholic-Jewish relations have progressed beyond the level envisioned in these guidelines. In those countries Catholic leadership has recognized that the admonition contained in these guidelines "to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience" requires an acknowledgement of the central role of peoplehood in Jewish religious thought and of the consequent religious character of the historic attachment of the Jewish people to the land of Israel.

While these new guidelines fail to take note of this important aspect of Jewish self-understanding, we are never-

theless encouraged by the suggestion in the introductory remarks that the "sobriety" of the guidelines is not intended to put a brake on the more advanced manifestation of Catholic-Jewish relations.

The guidelines constitute a document addressed to the Catholic community. It would therefore be inappropriate to comment on the implied theology of Judaism contained in this document, except to note that it diverges from the Jewish self-understanding and thus serves to underscore the theological distinctiveness of the two faiths. For Jews, the suggestion that Judaism look outside its own doctrines and dogmas for fulfillment is not acceptable. Also, the affirmation of the obligation of Catholics to "witness" to their faith leaves unanswered the question of the compatibility of such witness with the admonition contained in the guidelines that "dialogue demands respect for the other as he is; above all, respect for his faith and his religious convictions."

The call for joint social action is particularly to be welcomed. It is perhaps the most promising area in which Christians and Jews can seek the closest cooperation in proclaiming the sanctity of the individual human being, in seeking to alleviate human suffering wherever it exists and in the reversal of the disintegration of spiritual values and moral standards.

Because the guidelines are an internal Catholic document, it should not be surprising to find in it suggestions for certain interreligious activities—such as common prayer—which are religiously unobjectionable to Catholics, but which may be religiously unacceptable to certain

segments of the Jewish community. This, however, in no way lessens the positive response that is to be expected from every segment of the Jewish community to this new effort at mutual comprehension and cooperation between the two faiths that is represented by the guidelines.



#### Vatican Delegation's Intervention at the United Nations World Conference on Population

The United Nations sponsored a World Conference on Population in Bucharest, Romania, August 19-30, 1974. Among the 2,000 delegates from 136 nations were representatives of the Vatican led by Bishop Edouard Gagnon, head of the Vatican's Committee on the Family. This Vatican delegation sided with those nations represented at the conference that desired an emphasis on world development rather than on immediate, concrete programs for population control. The conference adopted a "World Plan of Action" to meet population problems and Bishop Gagnon, in the address that follows, commented upon the preliminary draft of that plan. For related materials on the population question, see the three statements reprinted in CATHOLIC MIND, April, 1974.

The responsibilities of the present conference are heavy, but we are sure that all of us here have decided to share them. We shall do so with more assurance if we let ourselves be illumined by a hope which is grounded both in a realistic knowledge of the difficulties

and in the belief that it is possible to overcome them.

It is in a spirit of service that the Holy See takes part in this conference, wishing faithfully to offer that contribution which corresponds to its own mission and nature.

It is rarely that international gatherings have concentrated on a subject more grave than that of population, such as is posed today. The problem of population touches the primary and fundamental relationship between man and his fellow men, a relationship of vital importance, for it is from man that a man receives his existence and his insertion into the human community.

The recommendations which this conference will make will be capable of affecting man in his most intimate being and in the exercise of his most sacred rights. Their impact will affect the future of generations and of societies, in their life, their culture, their structure and their equilibrium.

Mr. President, a great unrest is at the root of this conference and the World Year of Population. Undoubtedly, this unrest is nourished by artificial elements, but primarily it is based on the reality of two great human problems: underdevelopment, which is so difficult to eliminate, and growth, which is difficult to control.

To this first unrest is added another: fear, always a bad counselor, fixes our attention on apparent information rather than on deeper causes, tends to give superficial solutions rather than well proven and fully human ones. "And man is only truly man in as far as, master of his own acts and judge of