

## **Pope makes a revolutionary statement Nov 17, 1980**

**There was a revolutionary papal statement made in Germany on November 17, 1980, proclaiming that the divine "pact" with the people of Israel "had never been abolished."**

## **The Pope Asks to come to the Synagogue in Rome. The first Papal visit in history April 13, 1986**

**In 1986, when the Vatican inquired about a possible papal visit to the Roman synagogue, Rabbi Toaff responded with a quotation from the Scriptures: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.", the rabbi fixed the date for the papal visit: April 13, 1986.**

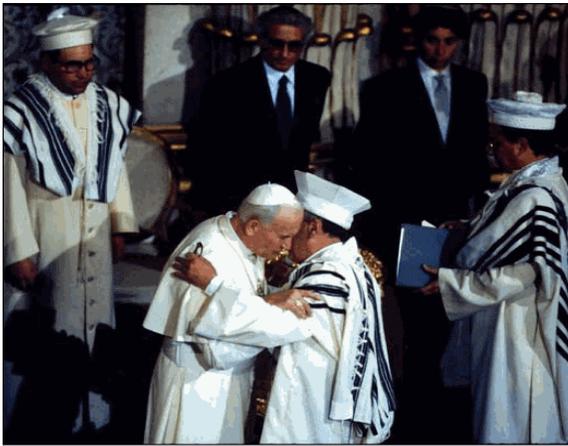


Photo © David Rubinger

Pope John Paul II embraces Italian Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff of Rome

## **Vatican Initiates Normalization with Israel Dec. 30, 1993**

- ◆ **Agreement between the State of Israel and the Holy See**
- ◆ **Pursuant to Article 3 (3) of the Fundamental Agreement between the State of Israel and the Holy See**  
**(also referred to as the "Legal Personality Agreement")**

### **Article 1**

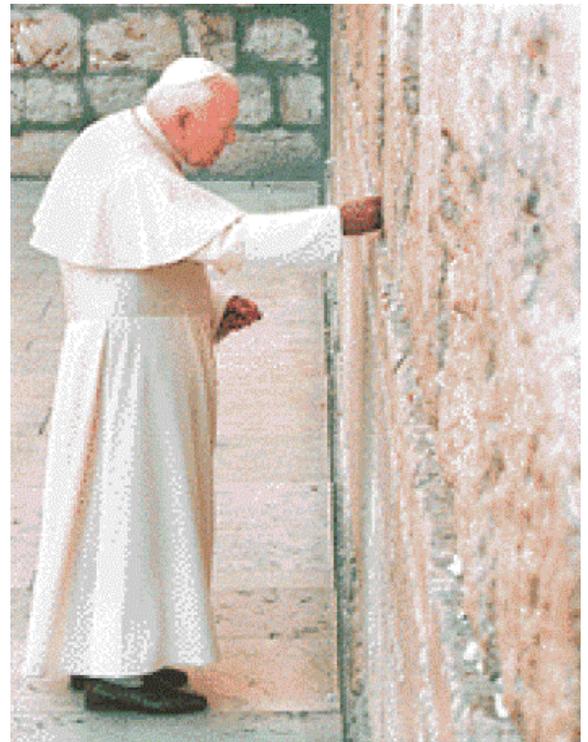
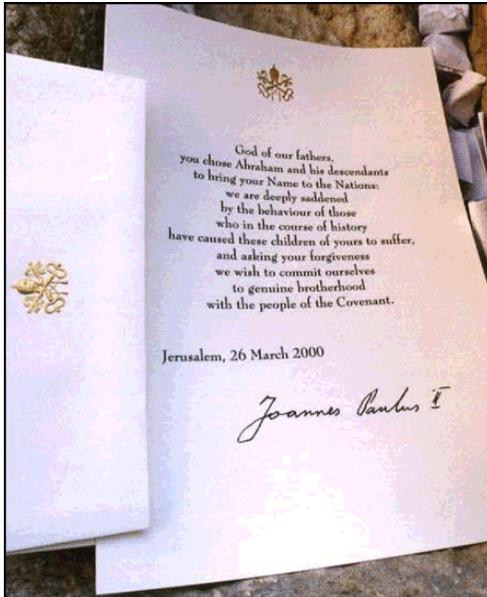
- ◆ This Agreement is made on the basis of the provisions of the "Fundamental Agreement between the State of Israel and the Holy See", which was signed on 30 December 1993, and then entered into force on 10 March 1994 (hereinafter: the "Fundamental Agreement").

signed in Jerusalem this 10th day of the month of November in the year 1997, which corresponds to the 10th day of the month of Heshvan in the year 5758 signed in Jerusalem this 10th day of the month of November in the year 1997, which corresponds to the 10th day of the month of Heshvan in the year 5758

## Pope Attends the Concert to Commemorate the Holocaust

- ◆ Pope John Paul II, April 7, 1994, at the Vatican audience and commemorative concert with Survivors of the Holocaust of Almighty God, we can work together to prevent the repetition of such heinous evil.

### Pope comes to Israel – March 2000



God of our fathers,  
You chose Abraham and his descendants  
To bring your name to the Nations  
We are deeply saddened  
By the behavior of those  
Who in the course of history  
Have caused these children of yours to suffer,  
And asking for forgiveness  
We wish to commit ourselves  
To genuine brotherhood  
With the people of the covenant

26 March 2000

Joannes Paulus II

## Pope Visits Yad Vashem

## Pope Visits with the Chief Rabbi of Israel



## Church's position of Anti-Semitism

- ◆ The Church "deplores all manifestations of anti-Semitism, at any time and anywhere," the Pope said, using the evangelic text to address Jews as Catholics' "older brothers."
- ◆ Cardinal, Edward Idris Cassidy rose to address the audience, no one - and certainly no one who was Jewish - was prepared for what he would say. In a statement fully authorized and approved by Pope John Paul II, Cardinal Cassidy turned to his Jewish brethren and made a public, heartfelt apology for past anti-Semitism caused by or perpetrated by the Church. Even more astonishing to the assemblage, the Archbishop asked for forgiveness using the Hebrew word *teshuvah*, which signifies "turning away" from past wrong-doing and simultaneously "returning to" a righteous relationship with both man and God.
- ◆ "Anti-Semitism is Anti-Christianity"
- ◆ Cardinal Tucci defends Israel in the EU Poll 11/11/03
- ◆ If Palestine had been listed among the states mentioned in the European survey, the cardinal said, he suspected that many European respondents would have recognized Palestine as a threat to peace as well. He complained that in criticizing the Israeli government, many European commentators "slide too quickly over the anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism" that motivates some of the harshest critics. He argued that the hostility toward Israel, which is growing in Europe, is tainted by anti-Semitism as well. In the Islamic world, Cardinal Tucci continued, overt expressions of anti-Semitism are commonplace. "Throughout the Islamic world-- on their radios, their televisions, in the media, in the schools-- there is an education toward rabid and malicious anti-

**Semitism," he said. "It is the worst anti-Semitism imaginable, except for the Nazis-- or even equal to that of the Nazis."**

**Vatican Moves to soften hard-line Palestinian Catholic Leaders**

- ◆ **Arab Patriarch Sabbah has an Auxiliary – But He Speaks Hebrew**  
The nomination of the Jewish convert Gourion as bishop for the Hebrew Catholics is a hard blow for the philo-Palestinian patriarch of Jerusalem. The pros and cons of a decision that is bringing the Vatican and Israel closer together
- ◆ **With Gourion's nomination as a bishop 'ad Judaeos,' the pope has established the conditions for an about-face. Beginning with the enfranchisement of the Hebrew Catholic community from the bullying Palestinian stance of the patriarchate.**

**ROMA – In mid-August, John Paul II placed beside the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah, an auxiliary bishop with a special task.**

**The task is that of "the pastoral care of the Catholic faithful of Jewish expression" who live in the Holy Land.**

**A FEW ARTICLES AND STATEMENTS OF THE HOLY SEE**

*If Christians must consider themselves brothers of all men and behave accordingly, this holy obligation is all the more binding when they find themselves before members of the Jewish people!*

-- Pope John Paul II in his address to the Jewish Community of Mainz, Germany, November 17, 1980

*1-September-2000 -- [ZENIT.org](http://ZENIT.org) News Agency  
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# POLISH BISHOPS ASK FORGIVENESS FOR SINS DURING HOLOCAUST

Church Denounces Anti-Semitism of Clergy or Faithful WARSAW, AUGUST 31

(ZENIT.org).- In a letter read in all churches of Poland on Sunday, August 27, the country's Catholic bishops express their "mea culpa" for the hostile attitudes shown by some Polish Catholics against Jews at the time of the Holocaust. In addition, the bishops firmly condemn all forms of anti-Judaism or anti-Semitism.

The Polish bishops approved the text of this petition for forgiveness on August 25, during a special assembly held in the national Marian shrine of Czestochowa, to celebrate the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. The content of the letter was published the following day in the "Gazeta Wyborcza." In their message, the bishops appeal to the faithful to struggle against anti-Semitism, and ask for forgiveness for the faults of children of the Church at the time of the Nazi persecution of Jews.

"We ask for forgiveness for those among us who show contempt for people of other confessions or tolerate anti-Semitism." The bishops define this, along with "anti-Christianity," as "a sin." The document refers to "the drama of the Holocaust planned and carried out by the German Nazis, primarily in Poland, during the German occupation." The bishops assert the "need" to acknowledge that, although there were "numerous generous acts by Poles who saved the lives of Jews," there were also "sins" at the time of the Holocaust, such as "indifference," and "hostility" by Polish Catholics towards Jews.

For this reason, the bishops request the faithful to intertwine ties of "Christian solidarity" with "the people of Israel," so that "such a catastrophe will never happen again," and "to combat all expressions of anti-Judaism, which arise from a false interpretation of the teaching of the Church, and the anti-Semitism derived from nationalist and racist hatred."

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# POLAND'S BISHOPS ISSUE APOLOGY TO JEWS

WARSAW, May 28, 01 (CWNews.com) - Poland's Catholic bishops on Sunday sought forgiveness from God and Jews for wrongs committed by Catholics against Jews during World War II, especially the 1941 massacre of Jews in northeastern Poland that had until recently been blamed on the Nazis.

Cardinal Jozef Glemp of Warsaw led about 100 bishops in the ceremony in which they sought forgiveness on behalf of the country's Catholics. "We want, as pastors of the Church in Poland, to stand in truth before God and people, but mainly before our Jewish brothers and sisters, referring with regret and repentance to the crime that in July 1941 took place in Jedwabne and in other places," Bishop Stanislaw Gadecki said in the introduction Sunday.

In July 1941, as many as 1,600 Jews were massacred in the town of Jedwabne. A recent book dispelled the myth that the killers were Nazis. "Among the perpetrators were also Poles and Catholics, baptized people," said Bishop Gadecki, who chairs the Polish bishops' commission for interreligious dialogue. "We are in deep sorrow over the actions of those who over history, but particularly in Jedwabne and in other places, have inflicted suffering on Jews, and even death. We condemn all signs of intolerance, racism, and anti-Semitism, which are sinful."

Rabbi Michael Schudrich, leader of Poland's Jewish community of about 20,000 people, said the gesture had "the potential to be one more very important step" in reconciliation between Polish Catholics and Jews since the end of Communist rule in 1989. He had declined to attend the ceremony because it fell on the first day of the Jewish holiday of Shavuot. Before the war, Poland had an estimated Jewish population of 3.5 million, but about 3 million were killed by the Nazis in the Holocaust.

After an hour of prayers and solemn religious music in All Saints Church, at the edge of the Warsaw Ghetto, Cardinal Glemp finished the ceremony by reading a prayer written by the Pope last year urging more worldwide understanding for the Jewish people.

## U.S. Bishops announce evangelizing Jews is "no longer theologically acceptable" 9/27/2002 11:09:00 PM by Karl Maurer – CCI

On August 12, 2002, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops ("USCCB") released Reflections on Covenant and Mission ("Reflections"), co-written with American Jewish leaders. Citing "a deepening Catholic appreciation of the eternal covenant between God and the Jewish people" as one of the unfolding "fruits" of Vatican II, Reflections makes incredible claims: "campaigns that target Jews for conversion to Christianity are no longer theologically acceptable in the Catholic Church." (The full text is available at the Bishop's website, [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).)

William Cardinal Keeler, the USCCB moderator for Catholic-Jewish relations, called this refutation of historic Catholic teaching "a significant step forward in the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Jewish community." In the USCCB press release announcing Reflections, Rabbi Gilbert Rosenthal announced, "neither faith group believes we should missionize among the other to save souls via conversion."

Let's start with some background. In *The Documents of Vatican II* (American Press, 1967, Imprimatur, Lawrence Cardinal Shehan), Robert Graham, S.J. writes of *Nostra Aetate*, "(Catholic) missionaries often adopted the attitude that non-Christian religions were simply the work of Satan... *Nostra Aetate* marks an authoritative change in approach. Now for the first time, there is recognition of other religions as entities with which the Church can and should enter into dialogue." Prior to Vatican II, evangelization of non-Christians was focused on achieving conversions. After Vatican II, 'dialogue' and 'mutual understanding' were stressed as first steps, but the ultimate goal was still conversion to the Catholic faith. *Nostra Aetate* advised a tactical change in the approach to evangelizing. Nowhere does it explicitly advise abandoning evangelization entirely.

This has not been clearly emphasized since Vatican II. In Germany, in 1980, John Paul referred to the Old Covenant as "never revoked by God." Rabbi David Berger said Cardinal Ratzinger's concept of supercession (that Old Testament was replaced by the New, but the Old Testament still remains "vital") was novel enough to be acceptable to Jews in spite of Vatican letter *Dominus Iesus* that emphasized the primacy of the Catholic Church over all others. Even Cardinal George raised eyebrows when he announced, "the Church has also sinned against the Jewish people, first of all, in teaching that God's covenant with Israel is no longer valid for them..."

Marty Barrack, a Jewish convert and editor of [www.secondexodus.com](http://www.secondexodus.com), explains that the Jewish covenant remains valid to allow for eventual conversion. "By accepting Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Covenant, all Catholics are, in a sense, completed Jews," noted Barrack, though he acknowledges that this is "getting into theological deep water." On the other hand, the proponents of the "Church becoming" at the USCCB have incorrectly inferred from Vatican II that the Jews are already saved. The USCCB did this by redefining 'evangelization' to mean interfaith conversations with no intention for conversion, which *Nostra Aetate* does not condone, in spite of the USCCB's references to it in Reflections. Reflections also contorts the Catholic Church's longstanding acknowledgement that the Jews played a vital role in the birth of the Catholic faith.

Most Catholics have reacted to the USCCB's Reflections in disbelief. How could any Catholic Bishop accept that non-Christians could obtain salvation knowingly denying Christ, the sacraments, and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church? Wasn't the Catholic position made clear by Jesus himself in the Gospels?

Many Catholics have advised that Reflections should be rejected as unauthorized and non-binding. That may protect faithful Catholics, but it won't stop Reflections from being implemented as the de facto standard in the United States. Indeed, growing Catholic tolerance of homosexuality has been greatly aided by *Always Our Children*, an unauthorized and unbinding U.S. Bishop's sub-committee report that contradicts traditional Church teachings, but nevertheless has been printed and distributed widely by homosexual activists within the Church. Most Catholics are unaware of the 1993 *Balamand Agreement*, where the Vatican authorized the suspension of efforts to evangelize and convert non-Catholic Eastern Orthodox Christians the same way Reflections purports to suspend "missionizing" the Jews. How can Catholics reject the conclusions in Reflections without applying the same standards to the *Balamand Agreement*?

Faced with protests from Catholics (and Protestants) Cardinal Keeler issued "clarifying" remarks on August 16, 2002, which did not, unfortunately, contain any retractions. All Cardinal Keeler said was that Reflections did not represent official USCCB policy. Besides, any retractions would contradict the progressively liberal interpretations of *Nostra Aetate* as well as the *Balamand Agreement*.

While the USCCB showed terrible judgement in issuing Reflections, decades of unrestrained ecumenism from the Catholic hierarchy must be acknowledged as a contributor to the current confusion. As of this writing, no American Bishop has criticized Reflections in public, nor has the Vatican. On the other hand, Cardinal William Kaspar, the Pope's appointed

head of the Pontifical Council for Religious Relations with the Jews has publicly praised Reflections. Kaspar has previously stated in public that he personally believes the Jews no longer require conversion. Kaspar's comments have surely made their way to the Vatican. What are Catholics to assume in the absence of any response?

Of course Catholics should continue to evangelize. Barrack observes that "during His mortal life Jesus evangelized only Jews, so they obviously do not live in a separate saving covenant." Barrack also references Peter's miraculous speech to the Jews in Acts 2, followed by Acts 4, noting "there is no other name (but Jesus) by which we are to be saved." Speaking in Chicago at the September 13, 2002 Catholic Citizens forum, Rev. Joseph Fessio, S.J., Chancellor of Ave Maria College, emphasized, "This is the definition of the Catholic Church: an organization to convert Jews." We can't help but agree with Barrack's assessment that Reflections represents "an opportunity to evangelize the USCCB."

Reflections is beyond an embarrassment. EWTN's theology expert Father John Eckert warns, "if Reflections gains approval (by vote of all the Bishops in the USCCB) as it currently stands, I will seriously consider the prospect that we are moving into one of the signs of the end times, namely, apostasy." Considering the burgeoning homosexual scandal in the clergy, the USCCB appointments of Clinton cronies and abortion rights advocates to the so-called sex-abuse policy review board, and the latest USCCB mandate that Catholics may no longer kneel before Jesus at Communion, we may be closer than Father Eckert thinks.

The author wishes to thank Marty Barrack, Rev. Burns Seeley, and Joseph C. Maurer for their comments during the preparation of this analysis.

## [Catholic Church] Catholics reject evangelization of Jews

Item **362** • Posted: 08/14/2002 • Weblogged by [Religion News Blog](#)  
<http://www.religionnewsblog.com/archives/00000362.html>

The Boston Globe, Aug. 13, 2002

<http://www.boston.com/>

By Michael Paulson, Globe Staff, 8/13/2002

The [Catholic Church](#), which spent hundreds of years trying forcibly to convert [Jews](#) to [Christianity](#), has come to the conclusion that it is theologically unacceptable to target Jews for evangelization, according to a [statement](#) issued yesterday by organizations representing US Catholic bishops and rabbis from the country's two largest Jewish denominations.

Citing teachings dating back to the Second Vatican Council, and statements by Pope John Paul II throughout his papacy, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops declared unequivocally that the biblical covenant between Jews and God is valid and therefore Jews do not [need](#) to be saved through faith in Jesus.

"A deepening Catholic appreciation of the eternal covenant between God and the Jewish people, together with a recognition of a divinely-given mission to Jews to witness to God's faithful love, lead to the conclusion that campaigns that target Jews for conversion to Christianity are no longer theologically acceptable in the Catholic Church," declares the document, "Reflections on Covenant and Mission."

The declaration, which was negotiated by the bishops and an organization representing Conservative and Reform rabbis, demonstrates the dramatic changes in Catholic thinking about Jews and Judaism in the wake of the Holocaust. In the decades since Hitler's attempt to exterminate Jews during World War II, the church has rejected its longtime position that Christianity superseded Judaism and instead has embraced Judaism as a legitimate faith both before and after the life of Jesus.

"The significance is far more than theological, because for centuries it was the refusal of Jews to embrace Christian teachings that legitimized the persecution, and often murder, of Jews in communities throughout Christendom," said Robert Leikind, New England regional director of the [Anti-Defamation League](#). "What the bishops have done here is decisively separated themselves from that history and indicated once and for all that Jews have an authentic relationship with God and an authentic mission in the world, and therefore there is no reason for, or logic in, trying to evangelize Jews."

[...]

However, the declaration puts the Catholic Church at odds with evangelical [Protestants](#), particularly the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in the country. In a 1996 resolution, the Southern Baptists declared, "whereas [Jesus commanded](#) that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem ... we direct our energies and resources toward the proclamation of the gospel to the Jewish people."

At the time, the Southern Baptists decried "an organized effort on the part of some either to deny that Jewish people need to come to their Messiah, Jesus, to be saved; or to claim, for whatever reason, that Christians have neither right nor obligation to proclaim the gospel to the Jewish people ... we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

The Southern Baptists' stance has not changed since, according to spokesman John Revell. "The drive behind not just the Southern Baptists but all [evangelical Christians](#) is the conviction that Jesus Christ is the only way to have eternal life with God the Father, and anybody who seeks eternal life through any other means will fail," Revell said. "There is a misconception that Southern Baptists have targeted Jews. We haven't targeted Jews. Our focus is to get the good news of Jesus Christ to all people, including Jews."

Eugene J. Fisher, the director of Catholic-Jewish Relations for the bishops' conference, said the document issued yesterday acknowledges the divide between Catholics and evangelical Protestants on the issue.

"This is a free country and that principle of freedom of faith means I can't complain about their freedom, but here there might be a theological difference as well as a pastoral difference in understanding the relation of Christ's church to the Jewish people," he said.

Fisher said Catholic efforts to convert Jews "dried up" after the Second Vatican Council.  
[...]

Yesterday's declaration "caps a development in a certain theological direction, by pulling it all together," he said. "In the US, the motivation of the American bishops to watch that development closely is very strong, because of the dialogue with the world's largest Jewish community, which is in the US."

### A Jewish-Christian Revolution: 3

14/07/2001

## Why convert the saved?

Eugene Fisher

**The Catholic Church does not support organizations, which aim to convert Jews. Nor should it, argues the associate director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations at the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. For the Church believes that Judaism is salvific for Jews.**

EDWARD Kessler's summary of the current state of Jewish-Christian relations is itself a remarkable example of the level of "mature" dialogue for which he calls. There is much to ponder constructively in it.

He quite rightly points to mission as a major unfinished item on the present agenda. Today, Edward Kessler says, Christian understanding envisages mission with Israel rather than mission to Israel. There should be Christian-Jewish partnership in mission to the world, he concludes. What is the position on this question within Catholic tradition today?

Perhaps the best statement of how it appeared to Catholics at the beginning of the pontificate of Pope John Paul II was given by Tommaso Federici, of the Pontifical Urbaniana University, in his study paper, "Mission

and Witness of the Church", with which he addressed the 1977 meeting in Venice of the ILC (International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee). Federici emphasised the "irreversible" nature in the change of understanding of the Church's relationship to the Jewish people brought about by the Second Vatican Council. On the basis of a vast array of scriptural and magisterial sources, he argued that "none of the inspired Christian sources justifies the notion that the Old Covenant of the Lord with his people has been abrogated or in any sense nullified . . . The Church recognises that in God's revealed plan, Israel plays a fundamental role of her own: the sanctification of the Name in the world . . . Christ did not nullify God's plan . . ." Therefore, Christian witness must take into account "the permanent place of the Jewish people according to God's plan".

While this does not settle all the biblical and theological issues raised by "mission", it lays a solid theological groundwork. On the pastoral level, "unwarranted proselytism" is already precluded, as Edward Kessler notes, by the principles of religious freedom. Federici concludes, on historical and demographic grounds, that included in the prohibition of proselytism of Jews are any sort of "organisations set up for the 'conversion of Jews' ". The reason, Federici says, is that these have led in the past and will almost inevitably lead in the future "to the psychological and spiritual impairment of the freedom of faith of the Jewish people". Missionary activities aimed at Jews which might have been theoretically justifiable are precluded today and in the future by reason of the centuries of collective mistreatment of Jews by Christians.

Such reasoning, I have found, is overwhelmingly understood and accepted by Catholic leaders. The result is that there exist today absolutely no Church-sanctioned organisations designed to convert Jews. Federici's suggestion, repeated and reaffirmed time and again by the present Pope, is that the Church needs today to concentrate what might be its mission "with" the Jews, not "to" the Jews: the joint proclamation of the One God of Israel to the world, of the moral centre of human destiny revealed in the Ten Commandments, of the "saving warning" of remembrance of the Holocaust, and of the ultimate necessity for both Jews and Christians to prepare the way for the Kingdom of God by working together for Tikkun Olam (Mending the World).

But, many Jews would say, though the Church has abandoned any formal attempts to convert Jews, and understands itself to be "with" and not "over against" the Jews, don't Catholics still in their hearts long for their conversion? Might not that longing, frustrated, pop out again one day as it has so often over the centuries?

This might be true of some individual Catholics (and even a small minority of a billion people, of course, adds up to many). But is it true of the "heart" of the Church as a whole? To test that, one needs to look at what Catholics pray for.

There is actually only one official prayer for the Jews in the liturgy of the Catholic Church. This is the traditional Good Friday prayer. It was (and is) in the middle of a threefold prayer first for the Church (fideles, believers), then for the conversion of the Jews (perfideles, half-believers), and for the conversion of unbelievers (infideles). Over the centuries, the Christian teaching of contempt for the Jews burdened the original theological category of perfideles with so much opprobrium that the modern term "perfidious" took on a far more insidious and sinister meaning than perhaps first intended by the ancient liturgy. Thus, Pope Pius XII in the early 1950s instructed that perfideles should no longer be translated as "perfidious" in liturgical books such as missals, but rather as "unbelieving" or "unfaithful". John XXIII decided that the Latin term should be deleted from the prayer altogether, though it remained a prayer for the conversion of Jews. The reform of the liturgy mandated by the Second Vatican Council, however, rethought and rewrote the prayer entirely.

It now reads: "Let us pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God, that they may continue to grow in the love of his Name and in faithfulness to his covenant. Almighty and eternal God, long ago you gave your promise to Abraham and his posterity. Listen to your Church as we pray that the people you first made your own may arrive at the fullness of redemption."

The phrase, "fullness of redemption", here, is not historical but looks to the Last Things. Like St Paul in Romans 11, it consigns the issue to God's mercy, to be revealed at the end of time. I believe this was intentional as a way of resolving the question in the present dispensation. So, no, the Church does not wish the conversion of the Jews as a people to Christianity. Otherwise Catholics would at least pray for it. This does not, of course, preclude the acceptance into the Church of individual Jews whose own personal spiritual lives have led them to the Catholic faith. To exclude these would in my opinion be itself a travesty of the principles of religious freedom.

EDWARD Kessler is very critical of the Vatican document *Dominus Iesus* issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith last year. "Its hard-line approach to other religions and other Churches serves only to confuse rather than clarify", he declares. He and I debated the interpretation of *Dominus Iesus* in *The Tablet* of 18 November 2000. Perhaps ironically, it is a statement recently made by Cardinal Kasper of the Holy See's Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews that I find most promising in this context of mission. How are Catholics to proclaim the Good News universally while at the same time acknowledging the profound particularity of their unique relationship with God's People, Israel? It needs to be understood here that Kasper's declaration, while not quite on the order of the statement of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith which it interprets, is nonetheless not simply another "opinion". It was issued on a formal occasion when the cardinal was speaking for the Catholic Church to the Jewish people.

So it represents the definitive statement by the Holy See itself of the meaning of *Dominus Iesus* for Catholic-Jewish relations. Kasper affirms unequivocally that "the document *Dominus Iesus* does not state that everybody needs to become a Catholic in order to be saved by God. On the contrary, it declares that God's grace, which is the grace of Jesus Christ according to our faith, is available to all. Therefore, the Church believes that Judaism, i.e. the faithful response of the Jewish people to God's irrevocable covenant, is salvific for them, because God is faithful to his promises."

Embedded in this statement of the Church's official teaching on Judaism is a distinction that many who have read *Dominus Iesus*, even knowledgeably, have missed. Edward Kessler states, for example, that the Christian belief that salvation can come only through Jesus or through the Church "relegates not only Judaism but all other faiths to a position of inferiority". But belief that salvation comes, ultimately and in a way known only to God, somehow through the divine act of Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection, is a far different thing from an assertion that salvation can only come through joining "the Church". The former statement is no more (and no less) "exclusivist" and "particularist" than Judaism's own affirmation that the One God is Lord and Redeemer of all humanity, while the latter leads to the (false, from the point of view of Catholicism) notion that anyone not baptised cannot be saved. The former, in other words, is simply a logical application of the doctrine that Jesus is, indeed, one and the same as the God of Israel, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

Now, since the God with whom Jesus is thus identified is none other than the One God of Israel, this in no way reduces Judaism, which is the response of God's people to God's initiative, to an "inferior" position. God cannot be "inferior" to himself. Thus, the Christian affirmation of the definitive nature of the Christ event – an event which is not just of historical significance but, again, looks toward the Last Things – does not in itself "foresee the conversion of all" to Christianity any more than Judaism's affirmation that all humanity at the end of time "will acknowledge the superiority and sovereignty of the God of Israel". Both statements at heart testify to the "oneness" of the same God who alone is creator and redeemer of all humanity. Indeed, I would argue, the two affirmations are very much on the same order of universalism/particularism.

Kasper then attempts to add some clarity to Catholic language that definitely, in my opinion, needs clarifying. He argues so cogently that much that the Church does as Church (good works, prayer, liturgy) has absolutely nothing to do with bringing non-believers to join the Church, but rather with "converting" Catholics to a deeper relationship with God through Christ. Dialogue is, like good works, something engaged in for its own sake (mutual understanding and reconciliation), not for the sake of "converting" other believers to our faith.

One of the many evangelising actions of the Church, of course, is "mission" in the narrower sense. Kasper rightly defines it as converting people "from false gods and idols to the true and one God". Again, this is an entrenched biblical concept which has its roots especially in the prophetic tradition of Israel. But, of course, the Church acknowledges that Judaism is already the worship of "the true and one God", so there is no need for this type of "mission" to the Jews. Jews are already "with the Father" in a permanent relationship of covenant. "Thus", Kasper concludes, "mission in this strict sense cannot be used with regard to Jews, who believe in the true and one God. Therefore – and this is characteristic – there does not exist any Catholic missionary organisation for Jews. There is dialogue with Jews; there is no mission in this proper sense of the word toward them . . . In today's world, we, Jews and Christians, have a common mission: together we should give an orientation. Together we must be ambassadors of peace."

I must candidly admit that not all of the documents that have been issued by various dicasteries in the Holy See over the past decades since the Second Vatican Council have been this clear in their language. Which is why we Catholics have much to do to render our speech, both unofficially and officially, much more consistent

and clear than it now is. But I believe just as deeply that the doctrinal understanding outlined by Cardinal Kasper represents the agenda for the future of Catholic teaching. We simply need time to work through the complexities of our own language and settle on a better way to articulate our beliefs.

### **John Paul II Condemns Racism and Anti-Semitism**

Receives American Jewish Committee in Audience

VATICAN CITY, FEB. 5, 2004 ([Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)).- John Paul II condemned racism and anti-Semitism, when he received a delegation of the American Jewish Committee in audience.

The Pope also repeated his contention that violence desecrates religion when it seeks justification in the latter.

As he received his guests, the Holy Father noted the forthcoming 40th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council declaration "Nostra Aetate," which "has so significantly contributed to the strengthening of Jewish-Catholic relations."

The Jewish committee visited the Pope in 1985 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Vatican II declaration.

Forty years later, "there is, regrettably, a great need to repeat our utter condemnation of racism and anti-Semitism," John Paul II said in his brief English-language address.

"Violence in the name of religion is always a desecration of religion," he said. "Countering this alarming trend requires that together we stress the importance of religious education which promotes respect and love towards others."

The Pontiff referred to the present situation in the Holy Land, "which continues to be afflicted by violence and suffering."

"It is my fervent prayer that a just solution will be found which respects the rights and security of both Israelis and Palestinians," the Holy Father said before invoking peace in Hebrew: "Shalom aleichem."

ZE040205

### **Cardinal Decries Terror, Fears for Christians**

VATICAN CITY ([CWNews.com](http://CWNews.com)) - Speaking on Vatican Radio today, Cardinal Roberto Tucci condemned the "truly inhuman" ideology of Palestinian terrorism, and voiced his fears about the status of Christians in the Middle East.

Referring to the most recent suicided bombing in the Holy Land, Cardinal Tucci remarked: "An ideology that manages to penetrate the soul of a young mother with extremely young children, and to turn her into an instrument of death - when she should be precisely the one to defend life... is truly inhuman."

"I don't want to say that Islam led to that. But any form of Islam that reaches that end is extremely inhuman," he added.

The Italian cardinal - who for several years was responsible for advance planning for papal trips - said that he was extremely concerned about the "hemorrhage" of Christians leaving the Holy Land. He expressed understanding for the desire to emigrate, since "the current situation pushes Christians in that direction." He explained that young people, "who have the opportunity to change their lives, are looking to leave" for the stability and security of the Western world.

The crisis of Christian emigration is caused primarily by "a difficult economic situation" accompanied by "a delicate social situation," the cardinal said. Christians have a difficult time making a living, he remarked - and even when they are successful in that regard they are viewed with some suspicion by the Muslim majority. He said: "Since Islam does not always regard non-Muslims as real citizens, the Christians in an Islamic country find themselves in conditions of inferiority."

### **Vatican Poised for a Historic Concert**

Jews, Muslims and Christians to Gather This Saturday

VATICAN CITY, JAN. 14, 2004 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- An unprecedented concert will take place in the Vatican, in which 300 Jewish, Christian and Muslim artists will perform, to promote understanding between peoples, cultures and religions.

The Concert of Reconciliation, to be held Saturday in Paul VI Hall, will be performed by artists of the Philharmonic Orchestras of London; Krakow, Poland; Ankara, Turkey; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

It will be conducted by U.S. maestro Gilbert Levine, KCSG, who for many years was conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Krakow, where he met Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, the future Pope.

Levine himself suggested the concert to John Paul II last summer, at a meeting in Castel Gandolfo, in thanksgiving for the 25th anniversary of his pontificate.

According to the program, Levine will conduct the Pittsburgh Symphony in a performance of composer John Harbison's new work, "Abraham," for chorus and orchestra.

Inspired by Genesis 17:14, the piece presents the divine call of the man whom Jews, Christians and Muslims alike all look to as their father in faith. The chorus will comprise singers from Pittsburgh and the Turkish capital, Ankara. The concert will also include a performance of parts of Gustav Mahler's Second Symphony.

In a statement issued in November, the Vatican explained that the concert is taking place "to promote the commitment to a peaceful coexistence among all the children of Abraham."

Sponsors of the statement were the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, and the pontifical councils for Promoting Christian Unity and for Interreligious Dialogue. The U.S.-based Knights of Columbus is funding the concert.

"In a certain sense," the statement said, "the concert next January 17 enlarges the horizon of that multitude of peoples who today more than ever must find in themselves and radiate the strength of fraternity, from which peace arises."

The concert is expected to attract, among others, the Chief Rabbi of Rome, Riccardo Di Segni; his predecessor, Elio Toaff; leaders of Rome's mosque; and the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See.

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## An Example of Christian-Jewish Dialogue

*Book Review by Nona Aguilar*

In 1990, Jewish attendees of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee which met in Prague, Czechoslovakia, arrived with certain expectations. Naturally, discussion of past anti-Semitism was an agenda item. But because new waves of it were sweeping through parts of Eastern Europe and Russia in the wake of the tumbling Iron Curtain, some Jewish attendees asked the Committee to include present-day problems for discussion. Church representatives serving on the Committee were also concerned about the new manifestations. They readily agreed.

Even so, when then Archbishop, now Cardinal, Edward Idris Cassidy rose to address the audience, no one - and certainly no one who was Jewish - was prepared for what he would say. In a statement fully authorized and approved by Pope John Paul II, Archbishop Cassidy turned to his Jewish brethren and made a public, heartfelt apology for past anti-Semitism caused by or perpetrated by the Church. Even more astonishing to the assemblage, the Archbishop asked for forgiveness using the Hebrew word *teshuvah*, which signifies "turning away" from past wrong-doing and simultaneously "returning to" a righteous relationship with both man and God.

### **"Anti-Semitism is Anti-Christianity"**

Besides asking for forgiveness, the Archbishop also made a statement that was especially electrifying:

It is on the issue of saving the radiance of the Hebrew *Bible* in the minds of man that Jews and Christians are called upon to work together. None of us can do it alone. Both of us must realize that in our age anti-Semitism is anti-Christianity and that anti-Christianity is anti-Semitism.



If Archbishop Cassidy's words burst like a thunderclap on the audience - and they did ("*anti-Semitism is anti-Christianity and that anti-Christianity is anti-Semitism* @) @) - it is only because important work that had been going on for nearly three decades to deepen the understanding between Christian and Jewish communities is not well known.

Now, thanks to the contribution of Rabbis Jack Bemporad and Michael Shevak=s remarkable and excellent little book, *Our Age*, a wider audience will have the opportunity to learn just how far relations between Christians and Jews have come in the recent past. Indeed, the authors' stated goal - "to present clearly and concisely" the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, and what they mean to both Catholics and Jews - is amply met.

As John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York, writes in his foreword, the authors have written "...as honest and evenhanded a treatment of Jewish-Christian relations as I have ever read ... I am deeply grateful for *Our Age*. @@

So, too, can the reader be grateful for some of the things he or she will learn from these pages. For example, it is not well known how frequently in her recent documents and statements the Roman Catholic Church has reaffirmed the special place of Jews in the mind and eye of God. One document states that the Jewish people "...still remain most dear to God because of their fathers, for he does not repent of the gifts he makes nor of the calls he issues." ("Declaration of the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.")

Making the same point, Pope John Paul II, in an address to the Jewish Community of Australia on November 26, 1986, said "...it is the teaching of both the Hebrew and the

Christian Scriptures that the Jews are beloved of God, who has called them with an irrevocable calling."

### **Special Relationship**

While recognizing that Catholics acknowledge the special position of the Jewish people, the authors are clear about how Catholics understand their unique and special relationship to Judaism. The rabbis express that understanding using substantially the same words Pope John Paul II used in his 1986 historic address in Rome's synagogue when he told the audience:

The Jewish religion is not 'extrinsic' to us, but in a certain way is 'intrinsic' to our own religion. With Judaism therefore we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are our dearly beloved brothers and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers....

If these breakthroughs in understanding come as a surprise, that is another reason to read *Our Age*. The book's title comes from the two opening Latin words, *nostra aetate* (our age) of Vatican II's "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions." Besides describing the progress in mutual understanding that has taken place in the recent past, the authors also:

1. Offer a sympathetic understanding of the causes of past Jewish-Catholic estrangement;
2. Clarify the true relationship of Catholics and Jews in this world and in God's plan; and
3. Present a vision of what the future can be as Catholics and Jews deepen their mutual understanding, respect, and, yes, their love.

The last point is particularly important. In a world filled with so much divisiveness, hatred and genocide, Rabbis Bemporad and Shevak present a challenge and a vision that should not be ignored. "Imagine," they write, "if the spirit of reconciliation could begin first between Jews and Catholics, and then spread to include other Christians, Moslems, Hindus, all God's peoples, all those who seek truth with reverence for the Divine Mystery in their hearts?" Imagine indeed!

## **Anti-Semitism Returning to "Old Europe," Says Cardinal Etchegaray**

VATICAN CITY, DEC. 23, 2003 ([Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)).- The "fatal plague" of terrorism and the "return of anti-Semitism in our Old Europe" are two of the challenges facing the world, says Cardinal Roger Etchegaray.

The "return of anti-Semitism in our Old Europe" is also undeniable, the cardinal added. "[Not] to recognize it, not to call it by its name, is an unconscious way of accepting it. ... Its contours are vague and are not reduced to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict."

"The path that leads to Auschwitz is always before us and it starts with little weaknesses," he

noted. Hence, he insisted on the need for "constant vigilance and frank solidarity with the Jewish communities."

### **Catholic-Jewish Meeting Condemns Terrorism and Anti-Semitism** Commission of Chief Rabbinate and Holy See Convenes in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM, DEC. 4, 2003 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- A high-level meeting of representatives of the Chief Rabbinate and of the Holy See concluded with a radical condemnation of terrorist violence and anti-Semitism.

This conclusion is reflected in the final statement of the third three-day meeting of the Joint Commission of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel's Delegation for Relations with the Catholic Church and the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with Jews.

In the final statement, signed by both the Jewish and Catholic Delegations, the participants expressed "their profound appreciation for the forthright statements emanating from the Holy See condemning violence against innocents and denouncing the current resurgent manifestations of anti-Semitism."

In this spirit, Cardinal Jorge Mejia wrote to the chief rabbis of Israel: "It is indeed not only cruel but vile and quite incompatible with any acceptable human standards to attack people in their places of prayer."

## **Italian prelate rips Islamic anti-Semitism**

Rome, Nov. 06, 2003 (CWNews.com)

Cardinal Roberto Tucci has said that the anti-Semitism he has seen in the Islamic world is comparable to that of the Nazis.

Cardinal Tucci, who until last year was the primary "advance man" for the Pope's foreign trips, made his sharply worded comments in response to publication of a survey that showed European people ranking the state of Israel among the top threats to world peace.

"I regret that this survey took place under the sponsorship of the European community," the Jesuit prelate told a Vatican Radio audience on November 6. "I also regret that the survey was published during a time when we are trying to revive the 'road map' to peace."

Rather than blaming Israel for the conflict in the Middle East, Cardinal Tucci said that the public should recognize that "there are many threats to peace that come from entities that are not governments but international terrorist organizations." He cited al Qaida and Hamas as examples of such threat.

If Palestine had been listed among the states mentioned in the European survey, the cardinal said, he suspected that many European respondents would have recognized

Palestine as a threat to peace as well. He complained that in criticizing the Israeli government, many European commentators "slide too quickly over the anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism" that motivates some of the harshest critics. He argued that the hostility toward Israel which is growing in Europe is tainted by anti-Semitism as well. In the Islamic world, Cardinal Tucci continued, overt expressions of anti-Semitism are commonplace. "Throughout the Islamic world-- on their radios, their televisions, in the media, in the schools-- there is an education toward rabid and malicious anti-Semitism," he said. "It is the worst anti-Semitism imaginable, except for the Nazis-- or even equal to that of the Nazis."

"We can criticize Sharon and criticize the Jews," the cardinal said. But in light of the fact that the Israeli people live under a constant threat of attack, "we need to be very understanding, even as we make the necessary criticisms." He pointed out that many Jewish leaders have criticized Israeli policies toward the Palestinians, and noted that there is no such loyal criticism among the Islamic nations, where "malign anti-Semitism has total dominance."

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ation. So the magazine reflects his thought faithfully.

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### **Fraternity Between Jews and Christians Aids Peace, Says Pope** Sends Message for Centenary of Rome's Synagogue

ROME, MAY 24, 2004 ([Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)).- In a message for the centenary of the Synagogue of Rome, John Paul II said that fraternal relations between Jews and Christians are a decisive service to peace.

The Pope's message was read Sunday by Cardinal Camillo Ruini, his vicar for Rome, during a ceremony held at the temple. On hand were leaders of the Jewish community in Italy and of other countries, as well as civil and political figures.

Emphasizing his regret at being unable to attend the event, the Holy Father had asked that Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, participate in his name.

John Paul II was the first Pope since St. Peter to visit a synagogue, when he visited the Jewish house of worship in Rome in April 1986.

In his message, addressed to the chief rabbi of Rome, Ricardo Di Segni, the Pope recalls the heritage left to Jews and Christians by the "great philosopher and theologian, well known by St. Thomas Aquinas," Maimonides of Cordoba (1138-1204).

The message noted that Maimonides "expressed the wish that a better relation between Jews and Christians might lead 'the entire world to the unanimous adoration of God.'"

"The Catholic Church, with the Second Vatican Council, convoked by Blessed John XXIII, in particular after the declaration 'Nostra Aetate,' has opened her arms to you, recalling that 'Jesus is Jewish, and will always be so,'" the Holy Father stated in his message.

The Pope, who refers to Jews as "our 'favorite brothers' in the faith of Abraham," said that "in the Second Vatican Council, the Church confirmed in a clear and definitive manner the rejection of anti-Semitism in all its expressions."

"However, it is not a sufficient duty to deplore and condemn the hostilities against the Jewish people which have often characterized history; it is also necessary to foster friendship, esteem and fraternal relations," he added.

"We still have a long way to go: The God of justice and peace, of mercy and reconciliation, calls us to collaborate without reservations in our contemporary world, torn by confrontations and enmities," the Holy Father said.

"If we are able to join our hearts and hands to respond to the divine call, the light of the Eternal will come close to illuminate all peoples, showing us the ways of peace, 'Shalom.' We would like to walk on them with only one heart," the Pope concluded.

The Synagogue of Rome, next to the Tiber River, gathers together the oldest Jewish community of Western Europe.  
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### **John Paul II Repeats Condemnation of Anti-Semitism**

And Praises Those Who Took Risks to Save Jews

ROME, MAY 24, 2004 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- In a message to the Synagogue of Rome, John Paul II reiterated his condemnation of anti-Semitism and paid homage to those who risked their lives to save Jews.

In the letter read by Cardinal Camillo Ruini at a centenary ceremony in the temple Sunday, the Pope said that "we are united in remembrance of all the victims of the Shoah," the Holocaust.

"It is a duty to remember all those Christians who, under the impulse of natural goodness and uprightiness of conscience, sustained by faith and evangelical teaching, reacted with courage, also in this city of Rome, to give concrete help to persecuted Jews, offering solidarity and assistance, at times risking their very lives," the Holy Father said.

"Their blessed memory remains alive, together with the certainty that for them, just as for all the

'righteous among the nations,' the 'tzaddiqim,' a place has been prepared in the future world, in the resurrection of the dead," the Pope said.

"Neither can one forget, together with official pronouncements, the often-hidden action of the Apostolic See, which went out to assist endangered Jews in many ways, as has been recognized, among others, by their authoritative representatives," he said.

"The Church has not hesitated to deplore the faults of her sons and daughters of all ages, and with an act of repentance has asked forgiveness for their responsibilities which can in any way be related to the plagues of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism," he added.

"During the Great Jubilee we invoked the mercy of God, in the sacred basilica in memory of Peter in Rome, and in Jerusalem, the city loved by all Jews, heart of that land which is holy for all of us," the message stated, addressed to the chief rabbi of Rome.

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## Catholic Church equates anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism

By [Shlomo Shamir](#), Haaretz Correspondent

The Catholic Church condemned anti-Zionism as a cover for anti-Semitism by means of a joint statement issued by a forum of Catholic-Jewish intellectuals this week.

The announcement was made at a gathering of religious, academic and other leading Jewish and Catholic figures. We oppose anti-Semitism in any way and form, including anti-Zionism that has become of late a manifestation of anti-Semitism," the statement said. in Buenos Aires.

This is the first time that anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism have been equated by the Catholic Church.

The statement also includes a stern condemnation of terrorism, particularly terror in the name of faith.

"Terror is a sin against man and against God. Fundamentalist terrorism in the name of God has no justification and cannot be justified."

Ilan Steinberg, director of the World Jewish Congress, one of the forum's organizers, described the joint statement as "an historic moment."

"For the first time, the Catholic Church recognizes in anti-Zionism an attack not only against the whole Jewish people."

Senior Jewish figures called the announcement a significant, public statement of support from the Catholic Church in the face of anti-Zionism.

"In the past, Zionism was equated with racism, and this statement turns anti-Zionism into racism," a Jewish leader said in New York.

The statement joins a prior European Union announcement and UN declaration of support for Israel as part of a global front fighting the scourge.