



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO A DELEGATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMITTEE
ON INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS**

Thursday, 9 June 2005

*Distinguished Guests,
Dear Friends,*

I am pleased to welcome to the Vatican a delegation of the *International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations*.

Our meeting takes place during this year which marks the fortieth anniversary of the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council, whose teaching has served as the basis of the Church's relationship with the Jewish people since then. The Council affirmed the Church's conviction that, in the mystery of the divine election, the beginnings of her faith are already to be found in Abraham, Moses and the Prophets. On the basis of this spiritual patrimony and the teaching of the Gospel, it called for greater mutual understanding and esteem between Christians and Jews and deplored all manifestations of hatred, persecution and antisemitism (*Nostra Aetate*, 4). At the very beginning of my Pontificate, I wish to assure you that the Church remains firmly committed, in her catechesis and in every aspect of her life, to implementing this decisive teaching.

In the years following the Council, my predecessors Pope Paul VI and, in a particular way, Pope John Paul II, took significant steps towards improving relations with the Jewish people. *It is my intention to continue on this path*. The history of relations between our two communities has been complex and often painful, yet I am convinced that the "spiritual patrimony" treasured by Christian and Jews is itself the source of the wisdom and inspiration capable of guiding us toward "a future of hope" in accordance with the divine plan (cf. *Jer 29:11*). At the same time, remembrance of the past remains for both communities a moral imperative and a source of purification in our efforts to

pray and work for reconciliation, justice, respect for human dignity and for that peace which is ultimately a gift from the Lord himself. Of its very nature this imperative must include a continued reflection on the profound historical, moral and theological questions presented by the experience of the Shoah.

During the past thirty-five years the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations has met with delegations of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews eighteen times, including the most recent meeting, in Buenos Aires in July 2004, devoted to the theme "Justice and Charity." I give thanks to the Lord for the progress which has been made in these years, and I encourage you to persevere in your important work, laying the foundations for continued dialogue and the building of a reconciled world, a world ever more in harmony with the Creator's will. Upon all of you and upon your loved ones I cordially invoke the divine blessings of wisdom, strength and peace.

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