



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO A DELEGATION OF B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL

*Hall of Popes
Thursday, 12 May 2011*

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to greet this delegation of B'nai B'rith International. I recall with pleasure my earlier meeting with a delegation of your organization some five years ago.

On this occasion I wish to express my appreciation of your involvement in Catholic-Jewish dialogue and particularly your active participation in the meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, held in Paris at the end of February. That meeting marked the fortieth anniversary of the dialogue, which was jointly organized by the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews and the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations. What has happened in these forty years must be seen as a great gift from the Lord and a reason for heartfelt gratitude towards the One who guides our steps with his infinite and eternal wisdom.

The Paris meeting affirmed the desire of Catholics and Jews to stand together in meeting the immense challenges facing our communities in a rapidly changing world and, significantly, our shared religious duty to combat poverty, injustice, discrimination and the denial of universal human rights. There are many ways in which Jews and Christians can cooperate for the betterment of the world in accordance with the will of the Almighty for the good of mankind. Our thoughts turn immediately to practical works of charity and service to the poor and those in need; yet one of the most important things that we can do together is bear common witness to our deeply-held belief that every man and woman is created in the divine image (cf. *Gen 1:26-27*) and thus possessed of inviolable dignity. This conviction remains the most secure basis for every effort to defend and promote the inalienable rights of each human being.

In a recent conversation between delegations of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, held in Jerusalem at the end of March, stress was laid on the need to promote a sound understanding of the role of religion in the life of our present-day societies as a corrective to a purely horizontal, and consequently truncated, vision of the human person and social coexistence. The life and work of all believers should bear constant witness to the transcendent, point to the invisible realities which lie beyond us, and embody the conviction that a loving, compassionate Providence guides the final outcome of history, no matter how difficult and threatening the journey along the way may sometimes appear. Through the prophet we have this assurance: "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (*Jer* 29:11).

With these sentiments I invoke upon you and your families the divine blessings of wisdom, mercy and peace.