



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC-JEWISH THEOLOGICAL COLLOQUIUM

6 November 1986

*Dear Friends,*1. I AM VERY HAPPY to welcome you on the occasion of your Second International Catholic-Jewish Theological Colloquium. In 1985 the Theological Faculty of the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the Centro Pro Unione and the "Service de Documentation Judéo-Chrétienne" (SIDIC), in cooperation with the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, opened this series of theological research in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Conciliar Declaration "Nostra Aetate". According to the spirit and the perspectives of the Council, the topic chosen for your Second Colloquium, which has now come to an end, is: Salvation and Redemption in the Jewish and Christian Theological Traditions and in Contemporary Theology.2. Contemplation of the mystery of universal redemption inspired the Prophet Isaiah to wonder: "Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as his counsellor has instructed him? Whom did he consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?". We are hereby invited to receive with humble docility the mystery of the love of God, Father and Redeemer, and to contemplate it in our heart in order to express it in our works and in our praise. Theological reflection is part of the proper response of human intelligence and so gives witness to our conscious acceptance of God's gift. At the same time the other human sciences, such as history, philosophy and art, also offer their own contribution to an organic deepening of our faith. This is why both the Jewish and Christian traditions have always had such high appreciation for religious study. Honouring our respective traditions, theological dialogue based on sincere esteem can contribute greatly to mutual knowledge of our respective patrimonies of faith and can help us to be more aware of our links with one another in terms of our understanding of salvation.3. Your Colloquium can help to avoid the misunderstanding of syncretism, the confusion of one another's identities as believers, the shadow and suspicion of proselytism. You are effectively carrying out the insights of the Second Vatican Council, which have also been the theme of subsequent documents of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. This mutual effort will certainly deepen common commitment to the building of justice and peace among all people, children of the one heavenly Father. Let us, in this common hope for peace, confidently express our praise with the words of the Psalm, inviting all people to pray: "Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for ever. Hallelu-Yah".4. As I said recently in Assisi, Christians are convinced that in Jesus Christ, as Saviour of all, true peace is to be found, "peace to those who are far off and peace to those who are near". This universal gift has its origins in the call

directed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and it finds its fulfilment in Jesus Christ who was obedient to the Father even unto death on the Cross. Whereas faith in Jesus Christ distinguishes and separates us from our Jewish brothers and sisters, we can at the same time affirm with profound conviction "the spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant with Abraham's stock". Thus we have here a bond which, notwithstanding our differences, makes us brethren; it is an unfathomable mystery of grace which we dare to scrutinize in confidence, grateful to a God who grants us to contemplate together his plan of salvation. Grateful for every initiative promoting dialogue between Christians and Jews, and especially for this International Catholic-Jewish Theological Colloquium, I implore the blessing of Almighty God upon all of you and pray that your work will bear fruit for better understanding and increasing relations between Jews and Christians. ©

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