

COMMUNIQUE OF THE BILATERAL COMMISSION MEETING OF THE DELEGATION OF THE HOLY SEE'S COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS AND THE CHIEF RABBINATE OF ISRAEL'S DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH (JERUSALEM, APRIL 29-30, 2013; IYAR 19-20, 5773)

The Bilateral Commission of the Holy See and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel held its 12th meeting in Mishkenot Sha'ananim, Jerusalem. The meeting dedicated its first day to celebrating the memory of Pope John XXIII on the 50th anniversary of his death, with a conference on his historic role in transforming the attitude and teaching of the Catholic Church towards the Jewish people, based on mutual respect and affirmation of the eternal Covenant between God and Israel in keeping with the declaration *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council.

Meeting shortly after the ascension of Pope Francis to the Papacy, the Commission noted his past well-known deep engagement and friendship with the Jewish community in Buenos Aires in particular. The Commission accordingly looks forward to the continuation and deepening of Catholic-Jewish relations during his Papacy, following on from the historic strides under his predecessors.

At this very time these are being epitomized in a particular way in the meeting taking place at the Vatican between Pope Francis and President Shimon Peres, who had sent a message of greeting to the Conference accordingly. This meeting in Rome was noted with satisfaction by the Commission.

The Commission reaffirmed the importance of educating our respective communities about the nature, substance and significance of these changes.

The Commission accordingly calls on the Israeli Ministry of Education, and on the Holy See's Congregation for Catholic Education to explore ways and means by which the above-mentioned developments and their substance – together with respect for the identity and integrity of each other – can become an integral part of the required syllabus of educational institutions under their respective authorities.

The mutual respect and friendship that has been established between us over recent years, brings with it the responsibility not only to present each other the way each sees themselves; but also to defend and advance the wellbeing of each others' community.

This requires us to stand up against prejudice and threats – in particular against Jews and Christians. Especially where one community is the dominant ethos of a country and the other is a vulnerable minority, the responsibility on the former is even greater.

Accordingly, the Catholic delegation reaffirms the commitment of the Holy See to do its utmost to combat anti-Semitism everywhere, in keeping with the declaration *Nostra Aetate*, and especially where the dominant ethos is Catholic; and the delegation from the Chief Rabbinate reaffirms its resolve to do its utmost to promote the wellbeing of the Christian minority in the State of Israel.

In this regard, the Commission expresses its fervent hope that the protracted negotiations between the Holy See and the State of Israel to resolve all outstanding issues will be speedily resolved and ratified.

In conclusion the Bilateral Commission reaffirmed its trust in the Lord of Creation and History, giving thanks for its dialogue and common witness, and asking for His continued blessing on its endeavors.