

Monthly Highlights

February 2013

International Interreligious Affairs

February 3-4, Spain

The Catholic University of Murcia (UCAM) in south east Spain, is one of the fastest growing universities in the country and the first lay university in the world to be accorded special Vatican status in keeping with the Apostolic Constitution [*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*](#), promulgated by Pope John Paul I.



UCAM was founded and is presided over by Don Jose Luis Medoza Perez KCSG, and due to UCAM's status and President Mendoza's own standing in the Catholic Church, the institution enjoys an especially close relationship with the Spanish Bishops' Conference.

President Mendoza has a special love for Jewry and Israel which led him to establish a week in the University calendar devoted to Israel and Catholic-Jewish relations. To this end, he reached out to the Fundacion Juan de Borbon, which was established by Sadia Cohen, a leading Spanish Jewish businessman, in order to promote Spanish-Israeli relations and enterprises. The Foundation enjoys close relations with Israeli political and religious leaders and was asked by UCAM to engage a parallel Israeli university (Bar Ilan University was considered the most appropriate) and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, to partner in the program for this event. My own involvement was specifically requested both because of my profile in Jewish-Catholic relations and as the Interreligious Advisor of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel

On February 3rd I participated in a preparatory meeting at the office of the Fundacion Juan de Borbon in Madrid, together with Messrs. Sami Cohen and Antonio Morato of the

Foundation, Professor Danielle Gurevitch of Bar Ilan University, Mr. Oded Wiener of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the representative of the Spanish Bishops' Conference.



The group then flew to Murcia where we were received with gracious hospitality by President Mendoza. The main part of the day was devoted to designing the program that is scheduled to be held from May 5th to 8th and will include various lectures/panels relating to Israeli innovation in science and technology as well as sessions focusing on the Judaeo-Spanish heritage and on Catholic-Jewish relations.

February 27 – March 3, Canada

At the end of February I was in Canada to lecture at the invitation of Jewish and Christian institutions

On February 27th, I lectured on the significance of the Second Vatican Council at St. Jerome's College at the University of Waterloo, Ontario. See <http://sju.ca/2012-2013-scarboro-missions>

On February 28th, I lectured at King's College, London, Ontario, as part of the university's annual international lecture program focusing on the Vatican's annual themes – this year's being the Year of Faith. I accordingly lectured on "Faith in Action – understanding Jewish Praxis". See: <http://sju.ca/2012-2013-scarboro-missions>; <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/campus-ministry/religious-life-lecture-series/>

On Sunday March 3rd, I addressed a gathering convened by the Canadian Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and the Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Toronto to speak on the subject of "Christians in the Holy Land". The meeting was attended by a wide spectrum of religious leaders, mainly from the Canadian Protestant denominations, and involved extended and intensive discussion on the situation of religious communities in the political context in Israel and the Palestinian territories and the position of religious communities in North America in particular as a result. See: <http://cnews.com/israel/christians-holy-land-face-different-realities>

Media

In addition to the media coverage above, this month involved me in extensive interviews with the printed press, TV and radio regarding the **resignation of Pope Benedict XVI**, his legacy for Catholic-Jewish relations and prospects for the future. I was invited to write an op-ed for the Israeli daily Ha'aretz which was widely reprinted internationally.

<http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/jewish-world-opinions/pope-benedict-xvi-true-to-his-declared-commitment-to-the-jewish-people.premium-1.502956>

Inter alia, I was interviewed by: the BBC ("News hour"); NPR ("To The Point"); Vatican Radio; IBA; Kol Yisrael; Galei Zahal; Ynet; Terrasancta News; Die Tagespost (Germany); Avvenire (Italy); RAI (Italian) TV; AP TV; The Jewish Week; and JTA.

Some of these and other quotes may be accessed at the following urls:-

<http://www.news.va/en/news/rabbi-rosen-pope-benedict-committed-to-catholic-je> (
<http://en.radiovaticana.va>)

<http://media01.radiovaticana.va/audiomp3/00357597.MP3>

http://www.jewishaz.com/us_worldnews/world/article_f7c7f204-7630-11e2-8b18-0019bb30f31a.html

http://www.denverpost.com/legislature/ci_22564691/popes-mission-revive-faith-clouded-by-scandal