

International interreligious affairs- October 2010 highlights

David Rosen

After a September preoccupied with the festivals, October has been a very full month.

3-5 Barcelona

The annual multifaith meeting (one of the most impressive of its kind) organized by the Community of Sant Egidio (<http://www.santegidio.org/index.php?pageID=2&idLng=1064&res=1>) took place this year in Barcelona. I spoke at two panels, the principle one being on the topic of "A Universal Ethic for a Globalized World ", see <http://www.santegidio.org/index.php?pageID=1777&res=1&idLng=1064&idTesto=220>

5-8, Scotland

The Jewish community and the Catholic Church in Scotland held a joint program of commemorative events celebrating the forty fifth anniversary of Nostra Aetate, at which Father Professor John Pawlikowski from Chicago and I were the featured speakers. The major event took place in Glasgow at the Giffnock Hebrew Congregation in the presence and participation of community leaders, activists and clergy, most notably the Catholic Primate of Scotland, Mario Conti. Other public lectures at the University of Glasgow, in Edinburgh at the Jesuit Center and at the University of Aberdeen.

10-12, Prague

Once again I was invited to participate in Vaclav Havel's Forum 2000 conference (<http://www.forum2000.cz/en/projects/forum-2000-conferences/>) which is held annually. This year's theme was entitled "The World We Want To Live In" and I was honored to be the keynote speaker on the panel on "Religion and Territory", see <http://www.forum2000.cz/en/projects/forum-2000-conferences/2010/summaries/territory-and-religion/>

13th, Rome

Undoubtedly the highlight of the month was the singular honor I was afforded to be the Jewish voice addressing the special Vatican Synod on the Middle East in the presence of Pope Benedict XVI with whom I met privately thereafter (accompanied by the Ambassador of Israel to the Holy See, Mordechai Lewy, and AJC's Liaison to the Vatican, Lisa Palmieri Billig.) <http://www.ajc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=ijlTl2PHKoG&b=849241&ct=8803257>

The text of my address to the Synod may be found at:

<http://www.catholic.net/index.php?option=zenit&id=30645>

While the invitation had been extended to me by the Pope and while I was identified and introduced at the Synod with my AJC attribution; my presence as the sole Jewish voice at the Synod was at the recommendation of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs who had been asked by the Vatican for their recommendation. In addition to the press conference prior to my presentation, the latter received extensive press coverage:-

(see: <http://www.jpost.com/JewishWorld/JewishNews/Article.aspx?id=191629>

[:http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hRkM7Orz2YP2cFqnUi28LTaSVMZwD9IQUEVO0?docId=D9IQUEVO0](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hRkM7Orz2YP2cFqnUi28LTaSVMZwD9IQUEVO0?docId=D9IQUEVO0)(AP)
<http://www.zenit.org/article-30646?l=english>
<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=7912>
<http://www.oecumene.radiovaticana.org/en1/Articolo.asp?c=429973>
<http://www.montrealgazette.com/life/Christians+peacemakers+Middle+East+Rabbi/3664078/story.html> (Reuters)

PHOTO:

http://srnnews.townhall.com/photos/view/faith_family/1014/pope_benedict_xvi_shakes_hands_with_rabbi_david_rosen_during_the_synod_for_the_middle_east_bishop_at_the_vatican/6ceee7aa-95e4-488b-b159-720511f30b3d/ (copy & paste URL into your browser to access)

26-28, Marrakech

This year's World Economic Forum's Middle East summit was expanded to include North Africa and took place in Marrakech, Morocco. (see: <http://www.weforum.org/en/events/WorldEconomicForumontheMiddleEastandNorthAfrica/index.htm>)

Among the different sessions in which I was invited to participate were a panel on "Coexistence in the Middle East and North Africa" (against the background of the memory of the Golden Age of Al Andalus in medieval Spain - does it really represent the ideal of peaceful coexistence of Muslims with Christians and Jews ?); and also the televised BBC debate on Making Peace in the Middle East.

28-30, Essaouira

Subsequent to the WEF meeting I went to Essaouira to attend the remarkable Festival of Atlantic Andalusia, as a guest of its initiator and president, Mr. Andre Azoulay, Counselor to the King Mohammed VI. See: http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2010/10/07/feature-01
<http://www.france24.com/en/node/4914548>