

## Monthly Highlights

October 2013

*International Interreligious Affairs*

### Oct. 14-17, Madrid

Every two years, the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews and IJCIC (the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations), the official international Jewish partner of the former (and of which I am a past chair), hold a consultation/colloquium that is known as the International Jewish-Catholic Liaison meeting (ILC). For the first time, this meeting was held in Spain together with the Spanish Catholic Episcopate and the Spanish Jewish community.

The theme of the meeting was "Challenges for Religion in Contemporary Society".

I gave the Jewish keynote on the "Challenges for Religion from New Political Realities", focusing on understanding the implications of the struggle for democracy and human rights in our times. The Catholic speaker was the (Franciscan) Custodian of the Holy Places, Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa



Addressing the ILC together with the Custos. Also at the dais, Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with Jewry, Ms. Betty Ehrenberg, Chair of IJCIC and Mr. Martin Budd, Vice-chair of IJCIC.

In addition to the colloquium itself, the conference participants were hosted in Toledo by the Archbishop of the city. At the conclusion of the meeting, the ILC issued the following statement:-

<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/fr/bollettino/pubblico/2013/10/18/0674/01515.html>

### **Oct. 25-27, Rome and Assisi**

The Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Family celebrated the twentieth anniversary of its “Charter on the Rights of the Family” and for the first time included perspectives from outside the Catholic Church. I was invited to present a Jewish perspective on the family and on the Charter, which I did to a very lively interactive session. Thereafter there was an audience with Pope Francis – the fourth time I had met with him since his installation.

On Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> I was the Jewish representative and speaker at the special Nostra Aetate celebration in Assisi organized by the Franciscan Order and the Bishop of Assisi.

The other guest speakers were the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Dr. Ahmad Ejaz, advisor to the Italian government on Muslim Affairs.



At lunch in the Franciscan Refectory following the event, with (left to right) the Bishop of Assisi Domenico Sorrentino, Patriarch Fouad Twal, Dr. Ahmad Ejaz and Mr. Claudio Ricci the mayor of Assisi

Reports and interviews:

<http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/inchieste-ed-interviste/dettaglio-articolo/articolo/assisi-asis-dialogo-dialogue-29072/>

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=19502>

<http://www.zenit.org/it/articles/amore-il-cuore-dell-esperienza-religiosa>

Photos:

[http://www.sanfrancescopatronoditalia.it/visualizza\\_fotogallery.php?id\\_multimedia=2061#ad-image-15](http://www.sanfrancescopatronoditalia.it/visualizza_fotogallery.php?id_multimedia=2061#ad-image-15)

The following link has an interview with me in English from 3:50 mins., after the Patriarch of Jerusalem Fouad Twal, in Italian.

[http://www.sanfrancescopatronoditalia.it/visualizza\\_video.php?id\\_multimedia=2060](http://www.sanfrancescopatronoditalia.it/visualizza_video.php?id_multimedia=2060)

See also : <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/nel-mondo/dettaglio-articolo/articolo/pace-assisi-religioni-29102/>

## In Jerusalem

- On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, AJC hosted an event in Jerusalem together with the Jerusalem Institute of Israel Studies, to launch the AJC publication of a Hebrew translation of “Christianity in the eyes of Judaism – past, present and future”, written by Rabbi Dr. Eugene Korn, with a forward by Rabbi Professor Daniel Sperber of Bar Ilan University and an Afterword by Rabbi David Rosen, AJC's International Director of Interreligious Affairs.

This Hebrew publication on Jewish-Christian relations has been sent out to schools, synagogues, libraries and yeshivot across Israel, the first ever Hebrew language publication promoting Jewish-Christian relations; and reflects AJC's desire to address the fact that few Israelis and even fewer among the religiously observant population are aware of the dramatic changes that have taken place in Christian teaching towards Jews and Judaism and of the new era in Christian-Jewish relations, in which AJC has taken an historic lead. While AJC has also been a pioneer in Christian-Jewish dialogue in Israel, this has been an encounter of a tiny majority in the past and the publication is an attempt to bring this awareness and the theological challenges involved, to a much wider audience.

The launch event was addressed by leading personalities in the Israeli Orthodox rabbinate including Rabbi Shlomo Riskin of Efrat and the Director General of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, Mr. Oded Wiener.



Speakers at the dais (left to right): Mr. Oded Wiener, Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Rabbi Eugene Korn, Rabbi David Rosen, Dr. Amnon Ramon

- On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, the French Episcopate held a special event in memory of the late Primate of France, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, dedicating a park in his name in the grounds of the Benedictine monastery in Abu Ghosh, which I was privileged to address.

The following day I participated in a dialogue meeting between the French Episcopate's delegation led by Cardinal Vingt Trois of Paris and Cardinal Ricard of Bordeaux with the newly appointed Chief Rabbis of Israel.

- On Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>, I chaired the opening session - addressed by the official leaders of the four major faith communities in Israel - of a multi-faith conference on Holy Sites, their status and protection; convened at the Israeli ministry of Foreign Affairs by the organization Search for Common Ground .