

## Monthly Highlights

### October-December 2017

*International Interreligious Affairs*

#### October

##### Rome 16-19

The October meeting of the Council of Ethics in Action at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in the Vatican took place on October 16/17 on the theme of Education at which I presented a paper on Jewish perspectives on Education highlighting the traditional Jewish *havrutah* method as an educational model.



On October 18/19, Religions for Peace, the world wide encompassing interfaith organization (of which I am an International President) held a conference in Rome on the role of Religions in “Advancing a Moral Alliance for an Integral Ecology” and I was among the speakers. This was followed by a meeting of RfP’s Executive committee and trustees who also met with Pope Francis.



Morocco 23-29

The ACCESS mission to Morocco, organized together with AJC's OGIA, invited me to be scholar-in-residence for the mission which focused on Jewish-Muslim relations generally and in Morocco in particular. The program was scheduled to conclude with participation in the Atlantic-Andalusian music and culture festival in Essaouira.



Athens 30/31

The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs invited me to attend and address its second international conference on promoting pluralism and diversity in the Middle East, with particular focus on the protection and promotion of the welfare of Christian communities in Muslim majority societies. This conference was also sponsored and chaired by the UAE as well as Austria and was attended by Ministers (mainly of Foreign Affairs) from the Middle East and Europe.



Following this conference I had the honor of a private meeting with Archbishop Hieronimos, the primate of the Orthodox Church in Greece; and thereafter, at the initiative of the Embassy of Israel in Greece and in the presence of the Ambassador, I addressed a gathering at the Inter-Orthodox Theological Centre of Greece on the subject of Jewish-Christian relations.

### **November**

#### **Beer Sheva, 6<sup>th</sup>**

Cardinal Kurt Koch received the University of Ben Gurion's Ladislaus Laszt Ecumenical and Social Concern Award. Following the presentation of the prize, the Cardinal addressed the gathering on the subject of the Return to God in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and I was honored to have been invited to respond.

#### **Jerusalem , 12-14**

The annual meeting of the bilateral commission of the Vatican and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel was held in Jerusalem reviewing recent documents in Catholic-Jewish relations. I was the Jewish presenter analyzing the document "From Jerusalem to Rome" issued by the official Orthodox Jewish bodies in Israel, the US, and Europe, that was presented to Pope Francis in the Vatican at the end of August.

See: <https://www.lpj.org/commission-of-the-holy-see-for-religious-relations-with-the-jews-meets-with-the-chief-rabbinate-of-israel/>





London, 20<sup>th</sup>

I was honored to be invited to address an interfaith event in the British House of Lords on the importance of interreligious relations that was also addressed by the Archbishop of York Johan Sentamu and Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra of the Muslim Council of Britain. The event was moderated by the former Archbishop of Ireland Lord Robin Eames. My remarks are on You Tube <https://youtu.be/L2ulUi4hFAY>



## December

### Jerusalem 5-7

The International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC, of which I am past chair) held its tenth consultation with the Orthodox churches under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This event celebrated the fortieth year of the institutional dialogue between our communities. This consultation focused on the subject of Jerusalem and its significance for the two faith traditions. In addition to being hosted by the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilus III, the event was especially honored by the participation of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew who received an honorary doctorate from the Hebrew University on this occasion.



Rome, 11-14

IJCIC meetings were subsequently held in Rome with Vatican officials including the Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin Archbishop Paul Gallagher the Secretary for Relations with States (i.e. minister of foreign affairs) and Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Dicastery for Integral Human Development.



In particular discussions were held with the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations led by Cardinal Koch to prepare for the next conference of the International Jewish-Catholic Liaison Committee.

The IJCIC delegation was also hosted by Israel's Ambassador to the Holy See, Oren David

The next Ethics in Action meeting was held in the Vatican shortly thereafter (though I was only able to participate on the day of the 14<sup>th</sup>) on the subject of Religious Responsibility for the Ecology as well as ways to enforce greater compliance and accountability.



I was quoted in the RNS regarding President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel <http://religionnews.com/2017/12/06/cheers-rage-and-shrugs-after-trump-recognizes-jerusalem-as-israels-capital/>